

# **History of the Syriac Dioceses**

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**3**

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Syriac Orthodox Archdiocese for the Eastern USA

# History of the Syriac Dioceses

IGNATIUS APHRAM BARSOUM I

Volume 1  
English Translation

TRANSLATED BY  
MATTI MOOSA



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## TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

The subject of the book is the history of the Syriac dioceses. It is a pericope of a comprehensive, two-volume manuscript that the author began working on in the 1920s. As far as I know, after the death of the author in 1957, the two volumes passed into the hands of the late Bishop Gregorius Bulus Behnam and, after his death in 1969, they passed into the hands of the author's nephew. After this date, the whereabouts of these two volumes is unknown. Fortunately, Patriarch Barsoum had already published portions of the contents of these volumes in *al-Majalla al-Batriyarkīyya al-Suryāniyya* (Jerusalem). An English translation of these Arabic publications is offered to the readers in this book.

This history of the Syriac dioceses covers the period from the time of Patriarch Ignatius Jirjis II (1687–1708) to Gregorius Anton, metropolitan of Gargar (1768–1774). It treats the lives and activities of several patriarchs, maphryonos and metropolitans, and their dioceses. It portrays the hardships these Fathers of the Syriac Church faced in the administration of their dioceses in Syria, Iraq and lower Turkey (Tur 'Abdin). At a time when the Ottoman state was suffering under total corruption, ignorance, and mismanagement, these Fathers steered the course of their dioceses with spiritual zeal and sagacity. Outstanding among them was Maphryono Basilus Shim'un II of Tur 'Abdin (1710–1740), a prominent learned man who authored several spiritual books and suffered humiliation and death at the hands of Kurdish chiefs. Amazingly, the Syrian Church survived the brutal treatment of the Kurds and Turks and the machinations of the Latin (Roman Catholic) clerics who split it in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and created the Syrian Catholic denomination.

Although the history of Syriac dioceses consists largely of biographical material, it nonetheless contains invaluable historical information about the Syriac Church and its management. Two major events stand out in the annals of this history: First, the secession of a schismatic group into what came to be known as the Syriac Catholic Church, and second, the effort by

the Syrian patriarchs to firmly maintain their authority and preserve the faith in Malabar in southern India.

The bishops and dioceses who split from the church and followed Rome did so under the influence of the French and by means of bribery. The schism not only weakened the church but also cost it enormous amounts of money which it could scarcely afford. In Malabar the Syrian delegates had to face the machinations of the Roman Catholic clergy, the Nestorians, and the clergy of the Church of England, who tried to draw the Syrian Church in that remote country into their fold. But despite the anomalous conditions of the Ottoman state, the lack of financial resources, and especially, the activity of some recalcitrant clergy of the Malabar Church who intended to usurp ecclesiastical power illegally, the Syriac Fathers, as Patriarch Barsoum has shown, stood firm in defending the orthodox faith and church traditions. The vicissitudes of the journey of one of these Fathers, the Maphryono Basilius Shukr Allah of Aleppo (which took him almost two years (1750–1752) and stretched from Aleppo to Cochin), as well as the incredible hardships he faced in Malabar, stand as a testament to the vitality and determination of the Syrian Fathers to defend the faith.

The saddest part of the history of the Syriac dioceses is that, despite its spiritual zeal and determination, it shrank increasingly during the period covered by this study. The Syrian Church and its congregations in Bedlis and Sijistan exist no more. The diocese of Kharput is reduced to a few families. Gone also are the churches and dioceses of Zakho, Duhok, and Summail in northern Iraq. Furthermore, many monasteries and congregations disappeared because of Ottoman and Kurdish persecution. Thus Patriarch Barsoum should be commended for compiling this history, for without his indefatigable effort and scholarly persistence, this history would have been lost to us.

Matti Moosa

## 1 PATRIARCH IGNATIUS JIRJIS II (1687–1708)

Ignatius Jirjis was ordained a patriarch on April 23, 1687, and passed away on June 5, 1708, being sixty years old. The period of his patriarchate was twenty-one years and forty-two days.

Patriarch Jirjis was the son of ‘Abd al-Karim who belonged to a family which produced for the church many notable priests and high ranking clerics. Among these was his uncle, the priest ‘Abd al-Jalil of the Tahira Church (Virgin Mary) in Mosul, Iraq, who was still living in 1658. Other clergy members in the family included his cousin the priest ‘Abd al-Azali of Mar Tuma (St. Thomas) Church in Mosul (1694–1703), and his brother the priest Rizq Allah, son of ‘Abd al-Karim, who was known for his piety; the patriarch’s nephew the Chorepiscopus Matta, and his son Cyril Rizq Allah, bishop of Mosul (1760–1772); the grandson of the patriarch’s uncle, Ignatius Jirjis IV, Patriarch of Antioch (1768–1781); and his nephews (the sons of his sister) Patriarch Isaac (1709–1724), Basilius Matta II, maphryono of the East (1713–1727), the priest Yaqub (Jacob, 1728) and Jacob’s son, Basilius Li’azar (Lazarus) IV, maphryono of the East (1730–1759).

Patriarch Jirjis II was born in the city of Mosul in 1648. As an adult, he desired the monastic life and became a monk at the Monastery of Mar Matta the ascetic. At the monastery he devoted himself to spiritual devotion and learning. He was ordained a priest in 1669, and set a good example for his brethren monks. In 1677, he was ordained a bishop for Jazirat ibn ‘Umar, known as Jazirat Qardu, by his spiritual head and guide Mar Basilius Yalda, maphryono of the East, and assumed the name Dioscorus at his ordination. When the See of the Maphrianate became vacant after Maphryono Yalda left his position to journey to Malabar, India, to preach the Gosepl, Jirjis was ordained a maphryono by the Patriarch of Antioch, ‘Abd al-Masih I, in 1684, and assumed the name of Basilius at his ordination. Upon the death of Patriarch ‘Abd al-Masih I, Maphryono Basilius Jirjis was unanimously chosen to succeed him as patriarch because of his spiritual zeal, which distinguished him from his fellow bishops. His elevation to the throne of the Apostolic See took place at the Church of Arba’in (the Forty Martyrs) in Mardin on April 23, 1687. He obtained the sultan’s decree confirming him in his new position.

Patriarch Jirjis spent twenty-one years defending the orthodox faith and protecting the interests of the holy church.<sup>1</sup> His activities in this regard are quite commendable. In the course of his patriarchate, he dismissed those who challenged the lawful leadership of the church or violated its holy canons. More than once, he retrieved the Church of the Lady (Virgin Mary) in Aleppo which was usurped by the schismatics<sup>2</sup> who seceded from the Orthodox Church. He rebuilt the Za'faran Monastery, which was the Seat of Patriarchs, after it had been ruined and deserted in 1699. He renovated the three churches of Mardin, the churches of al-Ruha (Edessa) and the Jazira, and the churches of Mosul. He built two new churches in the cities of Hisn Mansur (Ademan) and Zakho, and took great care of the Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem. In these activities, he was assisted by his nephew (his sister's son), Maphryono Basilus Ishaq.

Patriarch Jirjis suffered the persecution of enemies with patience until he won eternal glory, departing this life on the Friday of Gold, June 5, 1708, being sixty years old. Thirty-nine of these years were spent in the service of the Lord. He was buried at the Za'faran Monastery. After his death the Apostolic See remained vacant for eight months and three days.

Patriarch Jirjis, may God rest his soul in peace, was handsome and of pleasant and melodious voice. He was known for his devotion. He was also endowed with an elegant Syriac handwriting. Twice he consecrated the Holy

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<sup>1</sup> *tr. note:* It should be noted that throughout this monograph, "the orthodox faith" indicates the faith of the Syrian Church which rejected the formula of the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Chalcedon maintained that the two natures of Christ, the divine and the human, were united in one person in the Incarnation, but still separate from each other. The Syrian Church rejected this formula of faith and maintained that in the Incarnation, the two natures of Christ were united ineffably in one nature, not to be separated. In other words, this church believes that Jesus Christ was eternal God before he was born of Mary, eternal God when Mary conceived him, and eternal God when she gave birth to him. It insists that by his Incarnation, this eternal God became flesh; he was no longer two natures, God and man separately, but one Christ united in one nature, with the properties of both the divine and the human. Following this reasoning, the Syrian Church maintains that separating the natures of Christ after their unity means that there were two Christs, one human; the other divine, which is sheer blasphemy. It is most unfortunate that the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches, to this day, label those who rejected the Council of Chalcedon as "Monophysites," that is those who maintain that the human nature of Christ was absorbed by his divine nature, thus leaving only one nature—the divine. Furthermore, by "holy church," the author means the Syrian Orthodox Church.

<sup>2</sup> I.e., Syrian Catholics.

Chrism: in Aleppo in 1691 and at the Za'faran Monastery in 1699. He ordained the following twenty metropolitans and bishops.

### **1- BASILIUS ISHAQ (ISAAC), MAPHRYONO OF THE EAST (1687–1709)**

He was Severus Ishaq, son of the Maqdisi 'Azar of Mosul, metropolitan of the Monastery of Mar Matta. Prior to becoming patriarch, he was ordained a Maphryono of the East by Patriarch Jirjis II, with the approval of the synod of metropolitans which met in the middle of April, 1687. He assumed the name of Basilius at his ordination. Basilius assisted the patriarch in ministering to the church throughout his patriarchal term. In 1709, he succeeded Patriarch Jirjis in his office. His biography shall follow later.

### **2- DIOSCORUS SALIBA, BISHOP OF THE JAZIRA (1691–1714)**

Dioscorus Saliba was born in Jazirat ibn 'Umar. He was ordained bishop of the Jazira by Patriarch Jirjis II who called him Dioscorous at his ordination. His ordination took place at the Church of the Sayyida (Virgin Mary), in Aleppo in March, 1691, and not in 1692, as has been mentioned in *The Order of Ordinations*. He administered his diocese until 1698, and was then transferred to the diocese of Ma'dan whose seat was at the Monastery of Mar Gurgis. We came upon a volume composed by him on the *Order of Ordinations* in the churches of Hisn Kipha, Man'ar and others. He was still living in 1714. He most likely passed away shortly afterwards.

### **3- GREGORIUS YAQUB, METROPOLITAN OF GARGAR (1692–1712)**

Gregorius's native city was Gargar or Jarjar. He became a monk at the Monastery of Mar Abhai, well known as the Monastery of Ladders, on the bank of the Euphrates river. Because of his excellent traits, Patriarch Jirjis ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of Gargar around 1692, and called him Gregorius. He was beloved by, and dear to the patriarch, who confided in him for his virtue and zeal. He appointed him his deputy when he was absent from office traveling. In 1702, in the absence of the maphryono, the patriarch dispatched Gregorius to Mosul on some errand. At Mosul he ordained several deacons for the Tahira (Virgin Mary) Church. In 1704, Gregorius renovated the Church of Mar Behnam in the Jazira. In 1708, when the patriarch fell sick and passed away, Gregorius attended his funeral at the Za'faran Monastery. In the following year, he attended the synod which elected Patriarch Ishaq, and became the patriarch's deputy when he journeyed to Mosul. We came upon some of his activities up to 1712, after which he passed away with commendable reward.

#### 4- GREGORIUS SHIM'UN (SIMON), METROPOLITAN OF JERUSALEM (1693–1719)

Shim'un was born in the village of Salah in Tur 'Abdin and became a monk at the Monastery of Malphono Mar Yaqub in the neighborhood the Za'faran Monastery. Later, he joined the pupils of the Patriarchal Office. Upon the death of Gregorius Shim'un II, son of 'Abd al-Masih of Qusur, metropolitan of Jerusalem, on April 6, 1692, Patriarch Jurjis ordained him a metropolitan at the Church of Mar Hananya in the Za'faran Monastery in 1693, and called him Gregorius Shim'un. He was the third clergyman to be called by this name. Sometimes he visited the dioceses to collect alms in order to help his monastery pay the tribute.<sup>3</sup> Among these was the diocese of Mosul, which he visited in 1697. At times, circumstances required him to stay in the Za'faran Monastery, the Patriarchal Seat, and administer the Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem through its monks, as his deputies. In 1718, he was accompanied on his journey to Jerusalem by Dionysius Shukr Allah, metropolitan of Aleppo, who assisted him in disposing of the monasteries' interests. He passed away in 1719, having served the episcopate for twenty-six years.

#### 5- SEVERUS IBRAHIM, METROPOLITAN OF EDESSA (1694–1698)

Severus Ibrahim was born in Edessa and became a priest-monk at a neighboring monastery. When the Episcopal Seat of Edessa became vacant with the death of Metropolitan Severus Habib of Edessa in 1694, Patriarch Jirjis ordained him a metropolitan for Edessa and called him Severus. He was mentioned in the roster of patriarchs appended to the *Chronicle* of Michael Rabo (d. 1199).<sup>4</sup> He was also mentioned in some manuscripts of that time. It appears that the span of his service was short, and he passed away in 1698.

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<sup>3</sup> *tr. note:* This tribute was exacted either by the Ottoman government or by its walis (governors) in Mardin.

<sup>4</sup> This roster was compiled by late Syrians; a copy was found in the Garshuni manuscripts of Sadad (Arabic written in Syriac letters) and also at the Library of the Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem, from which we made our own copy. [*tr. note:* Mika'il (Mika'il) Rabo (the Great) was patriarch of Antioch from 1166 to 1199. He is famous for his comprehensive history translated into French by Rev. J. B. Chabot with the title *Chrinique de Michel Le Syrien*, 4 vols (Paris. 1899-1910), reprinted *Culture et Civilization* (Bruxelles, 1963). The first three volumes contain the French translation and the fourth, the Syriac text. It was translated into Arabic by Mar Gregorius Saliba Shim'un (Simon), metropolitan of Mosul with the title *Tarikh Mar Mikha'il al-Suryani al-Kabir*, 3 Vols (Dar Mardin: Aleppo, 1996).]



## **6- CYRIL BISHARA, BISHOP OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR JULIAN AND HAMA (1695–1721)**

Cyril was the son of Bishara, son of al-‘Ashari, son of Huraim, son of Dabak,<sup>5</sup> of an ancient notable family of Sadad which had many branches. Today it is known by the name of ‘Assaf, one of its ancestors.

Bishara was born in Sadad in the district of Homs, where he acquired church learning and was ordained a priest. Upon becoming a widower, he was enticed by ambition to capture the episcopate illegally. He was ordained a bishop by a trouble-making bishop called Behnam of Hbob, who resided at the Monastery of Mar Musa the Abyssinian. When Behnam was condemned and fled to Abyssinia, Bishara realized that he had made a mistake. He journeyed to see Patriarch Jirjis, offering his repentance. After he fulfilled the rules of penance, the patriarch ordained him a lawful bishop for the diocese of the Monastery of Mar Julian and Hama around 1695 or 1696, and called him Cyril.

Bishara resided in Sadad but in 1700 moved to the small monastery of Mar Mama the martyr, which is no longer in existence. Around 1702, he resigned his position, and Bishop Zmaria was ordained in his place. Bishara was still living in 1715 and, according to some, in 1721. Shortly afterwards he passed away. Several priests came out of this family of Dabak.<sup>6</sup>

## **7- CYRIL YESHU’, METROPOLITAN OF BEDLIS (1697–1729)**

Cyril Yeshu’ was the son of the priest Ni’ma. He was born in Hisn Kipha and became a monk at a monastery in Tur ‘Abdin. In 1697, Patriarch Jirjis ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of Bedlis and called him Cyril. In the roster of bishops he is called Dionysius. However, the name of Cyril is more correct, as we found in a Book of Ordinations at our Library. Church chronicles make mention of him up to 1728. After serving thirty-two years as a bishop, he passed away and was buried in the city of Bedlis, where his tomb could still be

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<sup>5</sup> See our handwritten tractates and the Hama manuscripts, quire 42.

<sup>6</sup> Of these we may mention the priest Barsoum, nephew of Bishop Bishara (1711), the priest Ibrahim of Hama (1756), the Chorepiscopus ‘Abd Allah Fa’ur (11847), the priest Sulayman Iskandar of Hama (1868–1891), the monk-priest Jirjis and his cousin the monk Isaiah, a virtuous and zealous person who sometimes served as deputy of the patriarch at the Coptic bishopric office of Alexandria, the Chorepiscopus Yusuf Sa’igh of Homs (1891), the priest Musa Jabir in Maskana (1911), the Chorepiscopus Harun (Aaron) who was ordained for Homs in 1922, and the priest Ni’mat Allah ‘Assaf of Sadad (1923).

seen around 1729. He was succeeded by Cyril Faraj Allah, metropolitan of Ma'dan.

### **8- ISHAQ (ISAAC) SALIBA, METROPOLITAN OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR ABAI (1697–1730)<sup>7</sup>**

Metropolitan Saliba was mentioned in some copies as a native of Qellith, a big village in the district of Mardin. It is also said that he became a monk at the Monastery of Mar Matta. Patriarch Jirjis ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of Mar Abai, the Persian martyr, around 1697 and called him Ishaq (Isaac). He was the only metropolitan to be called by this pastoral name

The compiler of the roster of patriarchs and bishops mentioned that the governor of his country (Mardin) forced Ishaq to participate in installing Shim'un (Simon) of Ma'dan as an intruding patriarch around 1699. Immediately, however, he rushed to the lawful Patriarch (Jirjis) explaining his predicament and asking for pardon. The patriarch, who was known for indulgence, pardoned him. However, according to Maphryono Shim'un of Manim'im, the installation of the said Shim'un of Ma'dan as an intruding patriarch was done by his nephew (his sister's son). He never mentioned Metropolitan Saliba.

Having administered his diocese in peace, Metropolitan Ishaq passed away in 1730, or shortly afterwards. He was the last metropolitan of the diocese of Mar Abai, whose remaining parts, including the town al-Sawar and the villages of Qellith, Bafawa, U'wayn, Kharuba and Ma'sarte, were added to the diocese of Mardin. Ruins of the the monasteries of this diocese can still be seen today, especially those of the Monastery of Mar Abai, its Metropolitan Seat.

### **9- DIONYSIUS YUSUF, METROPOLITAN OF MA'DAN (1701–1746)**

Yusuf was a monk from the town of Ma'dan. It happened that his uncle Shim'un, metropolitan of the diocese of Ma'dan, was displeased with some monks of the Za'faran Monastery who roamed through the dioceses collecting the patriarch's tithes. He perceived that he could become independent of the Apostolic See. To achieve his aim, he sought the help of the governor of his region. Also, he installed his nephew Yusuf as metropolitan in his stead, although Yusuf was a new monk and had not yet reached the age required to be a metropolitan. Moreover, through the intervention of the governor, Shim'un installed himself as an unlawful patriarch, as was related by

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<sup>7</sup> This monastery, named for Abai, a Persian martyr, is near the village of Qellith, north of Mardin, Turkey.

Maphryono Shim'un himself—and this is most likely. According to another version, Ishaq Saliba, metropolitan of Mar Abai, participated in the installation of Shim'un as an unlawful patriarch. Later, however, Yusuf regretted his action and went to see Patriarch Jirjis, submitting his repentance and asking for a pardon. The patriarch pardoned him after having him observe the canons required for penance. After he had observed the canons, the patriarch ordained him a lawful metropolitan and called him Dionysius. Meanwhile, Shim'un repented of his unlawful action and the whole matter was forgotten.

Metropolitan Yusuf administered his diocese until his death, which is thought to have occurred in 1746 or 1749.

#### **10- IYAWANNIS MATTA, METROPOLITAN OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR MATTA (1701–1713)**

Iyawannis was originally Matta, the son of Maqdisi 'Azar. He was born in Mosul and became a monk at the Monastery of Mar Matta shortly before 1672. When his virtue and zeal became well known, Patriarch Jirjis ordained him a metropolitan for the Monastery of Mar Matta in 1701, and called him Iyawannis. His brother, Basilius Ishaq, Maphryono of the East, participated in his ordination. In the same year (1701), Iyawannis planted the garden of the monastery, known as Junayna. He commemorated this event with an inscription which can still be seen on its wall. Sometimes, he administered the diocese of Mosul as a deputy of his brother up to 1712, when he became a maphryono, as shall be seen later.

#### **11- DIONYSIUS YUHANNA (JOHN), METROPOLITAN OF THE ZA'FARAN MONASTERY (1702–1706)**

Yuhanna was the son of Adam of Mardin. Before 1690 he became a monk at the Za'faran Monastery, where he also received the priesthood. Then, he became metropolitan of the same monastery. He assumed the name of Dionysius about 1702. We have traced his chronicle up to 1706.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> We said in our book *Nuḡbat al-Adhban fi Tarikh Day al-Za'faran*, 80, that Dionysius was metropolitan of the Za'faran Monastery from 1686 to 1702. The dates above are more accurate.

## **12- YUHANNA (JOHN), BISHOP OF THE LADY (VIRGIN MARY) OF THE NATIF (QATRA) MONASTERY (1704–1714)**

Yuhanna's native city was Mardin. He was mentioned in the roster of patriarchs and bishops. I found his name in the annals of the years from 1704 to 1714, during which time he resided at the Monastery of the Sayyida of Natif.<sup>9</sup>

## **13- BASILIUS 'ABD AL-AHAD, BISHOP OF ZARJAL (1705)**

His name was mentioned in the roster of patriarchs and bishops. Most likely he was ordained a bishop for Zarjal, also known as Bushairiyya, in the province of Diyarbakr, whose Episcopal Seat was the Monastery of Mar Quryaqos. We read an Order of Ordinations compiled by him at the Church of Mar Mama in the village of Halhal in 1705. It appears that the term of his episcopate was short, as is shown by the ordination of his successor Ibrahim.

## **14- GREGORIUS 'ABD AL-AZALI, BISHOP OF DAMASCUS (1706–1730)**

Gregorius 'Abd al-Azali was born in Damascus. He was ordained a deacon by Butrus (Peter), metropolitan of Jerusalem, in 1675. He studied under Gregorius Yuhanna, son of Ghurair, bishop of Damascus, who also ordained him a priest for the Church of Mar Behnam before 1686. In 1702, he journeyed to Egypt. After his wife died, Patriarch Jirjis ordained him a bishop for the diocese of Damascus at the Church of the Virgin in Aleppo in May, 1706, and called him Gregorius. He passed away in 1720, having served his diocese for twenty-four years. He (may God have mercy on him) was a venerable old man.

## **15- BASILIUS IBRAHIM, BISHOP OF BUSHAIRIYYA (1706–1742)**

Basilus Ibrahim was born in Midyat, Tur 'Abdin, and became a monk at a monastery of Tur 'Abdin before 1700. He was ordained a bishop of Bushairiyya about 1706 and was named Basilus. In 1707, he resigned his position. In 1710, he took care of the planning and building of the Church of St. Shmuni the Maccabean in the village of 'Ayn Ward.<sup>10</sup> For twenty-eight years, from 1714 to 1742, he resided at the monastery of the Patriarchal Seat. (Za'faran Monastery) where he also passed away. He attended the synod which

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<sup>9</sup> *tr. note:* The Monastery of Qatra, meaning dripping water, was also named after the Virgin Mary and overlooks the Za'faran Monastery.

<sup>10</sup> Berlin MSS. [*tr. note:* The author gives no information about these MSS.]

elected Patriarch Shukr Allah to the Patriarchal dignity. He is mentioned in the roster of bishops appended to the *Chronicle* of Patriarch Michael Rabo.

## **16- ATHANASIAS ASLAN, METROPOLITAN OF THE PATRIARCHAL OFFICE, AND THEN OF AMID (1707–1741)**

Athanasius Aslan was the son of ‘Abd al-Nur of Amid. His mother was Nazarkhan. He was born in Amid (Diyarbakr) in the last quarter of the seventeenth century and was called Aslan, a variation of the Turkish term Arslan, meaning lion, as he has personally related. Among his family were his two brothers, the priests Tuma (1728–1745) and Yusuf (1747) who served at the church of Amid.

Aslan became a monk at the Za’faran Monastery and was ordained a deacon shortly before 1697, and then a priest before 1705. Under Maphryono Shim’un of Manim’im of Tur ‘Abdin, he studied monastic rules and Syriac literature, of which he learned a great deal. For his virtue and knowledge, Patriarch Jirjis ordained him a bishop for the Patriarchal Office at the Church of the Malphono Mar Yaqub, overlooking the Za’faran Monastery, on April 16, 1707, and called him Athanasius. The compiler of the roster of patriarchs and bishops (appended to the *Chronicle* of Patriarch Michael Rabo), is incorrect saying that Athanasius was ordained as a bishop of Aleppo.

Athanasius attended the synod which elected Patriarch Ignatius Ishaq. When in 1714 the Episcopal See of Amid became vacant, Patriarch Jirjis ordained Aslan a metropolitan for Amid, to succeed its Metropolitan Timothy Shukr Allah. Athanasius administered his diocese ably for twenty-seven years. He taught and counseled the parishioners until God transferred him to his eternal abode on Tuesday, December 29, 1741. Athanasius also attended the synod convened at the Za’faran Monastery to elect Patriarch Shukr Allah in 1722.

Athanasius, may God rest his soul in peace, was well versed in the Syriac language which he transcribed in an elegant hand. Among his transcriptions is the *Book of Summer Husoyos* (supplicatory prayers) at the Church of the Za’faran Monastery, portions of which he translated into mediocre Arabic. He also translated into mediocre Arabic the *Husoyos of the Week of the White*, a *Commentary on the Mysteries* by Moses Bar Kipha; the *Book of Theology*, by his teacher Maphryono Shim’un which he completed in the middle of June, 1720, and the *Chariot of Mysteries* by the same Maphryono Shim’un completed in 1727. Moreover, he composed homilies in a pleasant Arabic despite its simple style. His life was characterized by virtue and piety. From an ode composed by some of his contemporaries, it can be derived that miracles of the healing of the sick were depicted on his grave.

### **17- JULIUS ZMARIA, BISHOP OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR JULIAN (1707–1730)**

Zmaria was born in Amid and became a priest of its church before 1684. When widowed, he became a monk at the Za'faran Monastery before 1699. Patriarch Jirjis ordained him a bishop for the Monastery of Mar Julian, and simultaneously ordained Athanasius Aslan a metropolitan, at the Church of the Monastery of Mar Yaqub on April 16, 1707. He gave Zmaria the name of Julius at his ordination, and not Cyril, as mentioned by the roster of bishops. His name (as Julius) was mentioned in The Order of Ordinations. It seems that providence forsook him, and he was defrocked for a few years. Later, he was directed by Bishop Sarukhan to the right path, as is mentioned in the roster of bishops. We have no further information about the details of his life. Most likely, however, he died between 1720 and 1726.

### **18- BASILIUS GURGIS, METROPOLITAN OF BUSHAIRIYYA (1707–1748)**

Gurgis (Jirjis) was the son of Ibrahim 'Abd al-Nur and his mother was Naslikhan. He was born in Aleppo. In some manuscripts which he transcribed, he said that Patriarch Jirjis clothed him with the monastic habit (as a novice) at the Za'faran Monastery in 1701. He studied under Basilius Ishaq, maphryono of the East, who ordained him a deacon. He was ordained a priest by Gregorius Shim'un of Salah, metropolitan of Jerusalem, and joined the students of the Patriarchal Office.

On May 25, 1707, Patriarch Jijis ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of Bushairiyya at the Za'faran Monastery and called him Basilius at his ordination. In 1722, Basilius attended the synod which elected Patriarch Shukr Allah to the Patriarchal dignity. In this same year he renovated the Monastery of St. Mark with the assistance of the new patriarch and 'Abd al-Ahad, metropolitan of Jerusalem, and Metropolitan Jirjis of Edessa. After administering his diocese for thirty-one years he passed away and was buried in his own monastery. He (may God have mercy on him) had magnificent Syriac handwriting. He left at the Za'faran Monastery a *Book of Liturgies* which he completed in 1727.

### **19- SEVERUS ILIYYA (ELIJAH), METROPOLITAN OF EDESSA (1707–1718)**

Iliyya was born in Amid and became a monk at the Za'faran Monastery before 1699. He studied under Patriarch Jirjis, who trained him in the virtuous life. On May 25, 1707, the patriarch ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of

Edessa and called him Severus at his ordination. At that time the church of Edessa suffered from disorder because of the parishioners' negligence and their bad treatment of the clergy. During his administration Severus restored order to the diocese. In 1716, he visited Jerusalem and ordained priests and deacons for the churches of Syria and Jerusalem with the approval of church officers. He passed away in 1718. We have an illustrated and embellished ancient manuscript in Severus's name, dated 1713. It was donated to us by the congregation of Edessa in 1924.

## **20- DIOSCORUS, BISHOP OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR MUSA**

Dioscorus was the last bishop who we think was ordained by Patriarch Jirjis. When the diocese of the Monastery of Mar Musa the Abyssinian became vacant for a few years because Metropolitan Behnam of Hbob had fled (as has been mentioned earlier), Patriarch Jirjis ordained him a bishop for the diocese (c. 1708), and called him Dioscorus. We are inclined to believe that he was born and raised in Sadad. Probably, he, like some of his fellow priests, was a widower. He is mentioned in the chronicles of that time up to 1721. We think that he passed away before 1725, when his successor 'Abd al-Nur of Aleppo was ordained a metropolitan.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *tr. note:* The above is published in *Patriarchal Magazine* 5, no. 3(1938). The author offers no more information about Dioscorus.





## 2 PATRIARCH IGNATIUS ISHAQ (1709–1722)

Ignatius Ishaq was consecrated a patriarch on February 8, 1709, and passed away on July 18, 1724, having served fourteen years, five months and twelve days. He was 77 years old.

Patriarch Ishaq was the son of Maqdisi 'Azar. His mother was Maryam. His family produced several priests and church officers, including his brother Basilius II Matta, Maphryono of the East (1713–1727), and the priest Yaqub (1728); and his nephew Basilius Li'azar (Lazarus) IV, Maphryono of the East (1731–1759); his uncle and predecessor, Patriarch Ignatius Jijis II (1687–1708), already discussed; and his brother the priest Rizq Allah and others.

Patriarch Ishaq was born in Mosul in 1647. When he grew up, he became devoted to the pious life. He entered the monastery of Mar Matta, where he was ordained a priest by his tutor Basilius Yalda of Khudayda, Maphryono of the East, in 1669. He continued to grow in piety. He exerted a great effort in renovating the Monastery of Mar Matta in 1673. Two years later he became the monastery's superior and did well by ministering to its monks. At the beginning of 1684, he was ordained a metropolitan for the Monastery of Mar Matta by Patriarch Ignatius 'Abd al-Masih I, at the Za'faran Monastery and was called Severus at his ordination. He was then elevated to the dignity of the Maphrianate of the East, and was called Basilius Ishaq, at the Great Church of Mardin. He was confirmed in his new office by the synod which met at the beginning of April, 1687. His uncle, Patriarch Jirjis II, entrusted him with the administration of the entire Holy Church (the Syrian Church). He ordained several bishops and a great number of presbyters, deacons and monks. While he was in Aleppo, Patriarch Jirjis II passed away. The fathers of the Syrian Church met, presided over by Maphryono Basilius Li'azar of Tur 'Abdin, and unanimously chose Ishaq as a patriarch. When he learned that he had been chosen as patriarch and was granted the certificate of investiture by the Ottoman sultan, Ishaq went to Diyarbakr, where he was proclaimed a patriarch of the See of Antioch and was called Ignaius Ishaq on the festival day of St. Severus of Antioch on February 8, 1709. He ministered in the holy church for fourteen years, five months and twelve days.

On July 20, 1723, a synod met and, with his approval, chose his disciple Dionysius Shukr Allah Sani'a, as his successor. Patriarch Ishaq went to Mosul, his native city, where he passed away on Saturday, July 18, 1724, and was buried in the father's mausoleum at the Church of the Apostle Mar Tuma (St. Thomas). He was seventy-seven years old, having spent fifty-five years in the service of God and his church.

Patriarch Ishaq was of good conduct and burning zeal for the House of God. He was of noble character and adventurous in performing outstanding deeds, as mentioned in the annals of the church. He was the right arm of his uncle and predecessor, Patriarch (Jirjis II), especially for his excellent traits and sacrifice for the cause of the Syrian Church. However, old age and sickness overwhelmed him, and moreover, the hardships of traveling to the capital (Constantinople) and other places forced him to abdicate his position. He (may God have mercy on him) was well versed in the Syriac language, in which he wrote a *Compendium of Morphology*. Copies of this work have survived. Also, he consecrated the Holy Chrism at the Za'faran Monastery in 1709 and once more on another occasion.

During his time as maphryono and patriarch, Patriarch Ishaq ordained seventeen bishops, including three maphryonos. First we list those whom he ordained as maphryonos:

### **1- DIOSCORUS SHUKR ALLAH, METROPOLITAN OF THE JAZIRA (1687–1697)**

Shukr Allah was the son of the Chorepiscopus Matlub Jazri (1668–1697), whose native city was Jazirat ibn 'Umar. He became a monk at a monastery where he studied church sciences and had good Syriac handwriting. The book of the *Order of Ordinations*, known as *Homologia*,<sup>12</sup> says that Basilus Ishaq, Maphryono of the East, ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of the Jazira and called him Dionysius Shukr Allah at his ordination in 1687. He managed his diocese for almost four years and then resigned his position. He was succeeded by Bishop Dioscorus Saliba. Shukr Allah reportedly passed away in 1695 or (more likely) in 1697.

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<sup>12</sup> *tr. note: Homologia* is a Greek term meaning Confession of Faith or Defense of Faith. It is usually proclaimed by the cleric at his ordination. Below, the author refers to it as *Order of Ordination*. For *Homologia*, see *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, ed. J. Payne Smith (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1903, 19 and the biography of Timothy 'Ata Allah, bishop of Edessa.

## **2- TIMOTHY SHUKR ALLAH, METROPOLITAN OF AMID (1690–1715)**

Timothy Shukr Allah, son of Yusuf, was widely known as the Amidian because he was born in the village of al-Qadi in the province of Amid (Diyarbakr). He pursued holy monastic life and became renowned for his piety. He was chosen to administer the great diocese of Diyarbakr, and was ordained its metropolitan by Patriarch Ishaq, who called him Timothy Shukr Allah in 1690. In 1693, he visited the Monastery of the Sayyida (Virgin Mary) in Hattach. After serving his congregation for twenty-four years, he resigned his position in 1714 and was succeeded by Metropolitan Athanasius Aslan. He passed away in the next year. We found in some books he copied that he had bequeathed to the church of Amid a cross set with gems.

## **3- SEVERUS MALKE, METROPOLITAN OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR MATTÄ (1694–1699)**

Severus Malke was born in Mardin. His father, Yesu' Fanna, was a notable of that city. His family produced several priests, including Iliyya Fanna (1689), his brother the priest-monk Iliyya Fanna (1711), 'Abd al-Ahad Fanna, abbot of the Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem (1718–1726), the priest Yuhanna (1720), and the priest 'Abd al-Masih (1796).

Severus Malke desired the monastic life and thus dedicated himself to God. He was ordained a priest before 1686. As he gained experience and a good name, Maphryono Ishaq ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of the Monastery of Mar Mattä and called him Severus at his ordination in 1694. In the next year he visited the town of Duhok, which until then had been densely populated by Syrians, and ordained priests for its Church of the Sayyida (the Virgin Mary). After serving his diocese for five years he passed away around 1699.

## **4- ATHANASIUS MURAD, METROPOLITAN OF THE JAZIRA (1695– 1716)**

Athanasius was Murad, son of 'Abd al-Masih, whose mother was Alaria. From this family came Athanasius's brother Gregorius Shim'un, metropolitan of Jerusalem (1679–1692). Athanasius was born in the village of Qusur in the province of Mardin and became a monk at the Monastery of the Lady of Natif. He studied under the Chorepiscopus Matlub Jazri and his son Dioscorus Shukr Allah, metropolitan of the Jazira, and gained a substantial knowledge of church science, on which account he was called Malphono (Doctor). In 1695, Mapahryono Ishaq ordained him a metropolitan, calling him Athanasius at his

ordination. In 1698, he was appointed the successor of Dioscorus Saliba in the diocese of the Jazira and assumed the name of Dioscorus. He served the diocese for eighteen years and most likely passed away in 1716.

### **5- TIMOTHY ‘ATA ALLAH, BISHOP OF EDESSA (1699–1707)**

‘Ata Allah was born in Edessa where he was ordained a priest. When he became a widower, Maphryono Ishaq ordained him a bishop for the diocese of Edessa at the beginning of 1699, under the name ‘Ata Allah Timothy, as is mentioned in the *Homologia*.<sup>13</sup> We found his name in a manuscript at the Library of Boston, USA.<sup>14</sup> Beyond this, we have no information about him. We assume that he lived until 1707.

### **6- DIONYSIUS SHUKR ALLAH, METROPOLITAN OF ALEPPO (1709–1723)**

Shukr Allah was the son of Maqdisi Yuhanna, son of Ni’ma Sani’a. Among his family were two nephews, Cyril Gurgis, metropolitan of Amid and Mardin (1720–1749), Gregorius Barsoum, metropolitan of Jerusalem (1720–1727), and their nephew (the son of their brother) the priest Iliyya Yuhanna Sani’a (1767).

Shukr Allah was born in Mardin about 1674. As a youth, he became a monk at the Za’faran Monastery, where he acquired knowledge of church sciences and trained in piety. He studied under Maphryono Ishaq, who ordained him a priest, and he accompanied the maphryono on his journey to the capital. He was very active, combining the vigor of youth with the determination of mellow age. For his excellence, the maphryono, who had obtained his investiture (from the Ottoman sultan), ordained him as metropolitan of the Aleppo diocese and called him Dionysius Shukr Allah, at the Church of the Sayyida (the Virgin Mary) of Aleppo on January, 1709. He showed a great concern for the administration of his diocese, not to mention the assistance he offered to Gregorius Shim’un, metropolitan of Jerusalem, to regulate the affairs of the Monastery of St. Mark. For this reason, he accompanied the metropolitan to the Holy City (Jerusalem) along with some of his students, namely, the monk Wanes of Gargar and the monks Yuhanna, ‘Abd al-Nur of Amid, and Ni’mat Allah on December 13, 1717. At Jerusalem the Latin (Roman Catholic) monks asked him to explain to them the belief (of the Syrian Church) in the Lord Christ. He wrote a beneficial treatise

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<sup>13</sup> *tr. note:* Concession of Faith which the author refers to as Order of Ordinations. See above the biography of Dioscorus Shukr Aallah, metropolitan of the Jazira.

<sup>14</sup> *tr. note:* These Boston MSS are now at the Harvard University Library.

emphasizing the natural and personal union (of the two natures of Christ), a copy of which is in our possession.

As he endeavored to defend the Orthodox faith,<sup>15</sup> the opponents of the faith<sup>16</sup> plotted to have him banished to the island of Arwad, near the city of Tarsus, by order of the (Ottoman) governor Rajab Pasha. This happened in July, 1720, and Shukr Allah remained there for four months. He was accompanied to Arwad by the monks Yuhanna, ‘Abd al-Nur of Amid, and Musa ibn Kuhayl of Sadad. For a second time, the same opponents provoked persecution against him and plotted to have him hanged. But the Lord, who does not neglect those who fear him, saved him from adversity. This event was related by the compiler of the roster of bishops appended to the *Chronicle* of Patriarch Michael Rabo, already mentioned.

Upon the abdication of Patriarch Ishaq, Dionysius Shukr Allah was chosen a patriarch in his stead on July 20, 1723. The rest of his biography will follow shortly.

### **7- BASILIUS LI’AZAR III, MAPHRYONO OF THE EAST (1709–1713)**

He was Iyawannis Li’azar of Mansuriyya, ordained by Patriarch ‘Abd al-Masih I as bishop for the village of Manuriyya in 1684. That same year, he witnessed the consecration of the Holy Chrism at the Church of the Forty (Martyrs) in Mardin attended by other bishops. In 1709, Patriarch Ishaq ordained him Maphryono of the East and called him Basilius Li’azar at his ordination. He was the third of his predecessor to bear this name. After serving his Maphrianate See for four years he passed away in the middle of 1713.

### **8- BASILIUS SHIM’UN II, MAPHRYONO OF TUR ‘ABDIN (1710–1740)**

Maphryono Shim’un is well known as the Toroyo (the man from Tur ‘Abdin). He was the most famous of the later fathers (of the Church) for his sanctity, devotion, and knowledge. He was born in the village of Banim’im (Manim’im) in Tur ‘Abdin about 1670. His father was Malke, son of Ayyub (Job) of Banim’im, and his mother was Sida. He was pious since childhood. Upon growing to manhood, he renounced the world and entered a monastery in Tur ‘Abdin with a native friend named Gabriel, son of the priest Emmanuel. Shim’un carried the yoke of the Lord Jesus and devoted himself to spiritual worship. In 1690, he and his friend Gabriel assumed the monastic habit.

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<sup>15</sup> *tr. note:* I.e., that of the Syrian Church.

<sup>16</sup> *tr. note:* I.e., the Latin Friars.

Shim'un studied Syriac literature and some sciences under notable men of his time.

In 1695, he visited the Monastery of Mar Matta in the Mountain of al-Faf, whose superior then was Metropolitan Severus Malke. He returned to his monastery and was ordained a priest. For a time, he lived as a solitary in the Monastery of Malphono Yaqub (Jacob), which overlooks the Za'faran Monastery. He spent time in religious struggle, vigils, fasting, prayer and the study of Scriptures, their commentaries, and hermeneutics in-depth. Also, he studied the entire religious sciences from which he benefitted immensely. He gained a great reputation as a virtuous man and was considered the best ascetic and learned man of his age. Indeed, no two will differ over his excellence. For his characteristics, Patriarch Ishaq ordained him a Maphryono for Tur 'Abdin and the Jazira in 1710 at the Church of the Apostle St. Thomas, in the village of Qutrul in the province of Amid. But no sooner had he assumed his new position than he faced hardships which disturbed his ascetic way of life. He was forced to leave his diocese in the next year (1711) and return to his solitary life at the Monastery of Mar Yaqub as he himself has said. He spent sixteen years in devotion and keeping night vigils, prayer, and reading and writing. He presided over the synod convened at the Za'faran Monastery to elect and install Shukr Allah as patriarch on July 20, 1723. In 1727, Shim'un returned to his diocese and resided most of the time at the Monastery of Qartmin (Mar Gabriel), the Monastery of Aho, and the Monastery of Mar Barsoum of Kafar Tut in the village of Manim'im.

The heart of this father was filled with the fear of God and he was blessed with remarkable knowledge of church sciences. He became well known for his apostolic zeal, for which he endured hardships as he traveled the countries preaching, guiding, and disposing of the affairs of people. Once, as he was preaching the true faith in Aleppo, he heard that some Latin (Roman Catholic) missionaries were deceiving the Syrian congregation with their teaching. He was urged to write the book entitled *Silah al-Din was Turs al-Yaqin* (The Armor of Religion and the Shield of the Certainty of Conviction) to explain the veracity of the faith of the Syrian Church regarding the Incarnation, and to refute the new heresies. A historical tract mentions that he reconciled the unlawful patriarchate of Tur 'Abdin with the Apostolic See following the death of Patriarch Denha in 1725, after the patriarchate of Tur 'Abdin had been vacant for fifteen years.

Maphryono Shim'un continued to strive for the truth until his life ended in martyrdom similar to that of John the Baptist. It happened in this manner: A

Syrian man, servant of ‘Abdal Agha (a Kurdish ruler), fell in love with and sought to marry a young woman who was his immediate relative. Since such marriage was forbidden by the laws of the holy church,<sup>17</sup> the wicked man appealed to the wife of his lord ‘Abdal Agha for help. ‘Abdal Agha’s wife pressured her husband to intercede with Maphryono (Shim’un) to sanction the marriage. The Maphryono rejected ‘Abdal Agha’s intercession on the ground that a marriage of this kind would be a violation of church laws. ‘Abdal became furious and delivered the maphryono to Muhammad Beg Bakhti, governor of the Jazira, to have him killed. When the maphryono stood in the presence of the governor, the governor ordered an attendant to give him a cup of poison to drink. The maphryono held the cup in his hand and blessed it with the sign of the Holy Cross. He asked the governor three times which side of the cup he wanted him to drink from. Then he drank the poison, trusting in the armor of faith, and was not harmed. It was our blessed Lord who said that “If they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all” (Mark 16: 18).<sup>18</sup> When the governor saw that the maphryono was not harmed by the poison, he was greatly astonished. He called his attendant and asked him whether he gave the maphryono real poison, and he said he did. The governor asked him to pour water in the poisoned cup and drink it. When the attendant drank the cup the poison penetrated his body, and instantly, he was dead.

The governor summoned the maphryono a second time to his presence. This time he asked him to sing and dance as an act of humiliation. The maphryono excused himself but began to chant in the Kurdish language his famous compassionate ode, known as Lavij, relating the Day of Judgment, the trial of the wicked and their torment. When the maphryono finished, the governor and his attendants were amazed at his courage and righteousness. The governor, Muhammad Beg, did not harm him but, instead, offered him gifts and sent him back home with honor.

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<sup>17</sup> *tr. note:* On account of the consanguineous relation of the man and the woman.

<sup>18</sup> According to the Syriac translation, deadly poison is very effective. The Maronite Bishop Yusuf al-Dibs said in his commentary on this Gospel, “They drink deadly poison and it will not hurt them.” The Arabic translation of the cited Gospel, from the Greek, says, “If they drink something harmful it will not hurt them.” Commenting on this verse, the learned Yaqub (Jacob) Bar Salibi says, “Some say that one of the seventy-two missionaries sent out by Jesus was given poison by mistake to drink. He drank it but was not hurt.” Bar Salibi goes on to say “Some put poison in the Chalice which contained the Blood of Salvation, to be drunk by a saint. When the saint took the Chalice he was not hurt. Many saints drank poison and were not hurt.”

When the maphryono returned to his monastery at the village of Banim'im, 'Abdal Agha learned what had happened in his meeting with the governor. He became angry but controlled himself. He asked the maphryono to permit his servant to marry his blood relative, threatening that if he refused he would cast him into prison in chains and torture him. This happened in mid-Lent, 1740. On the Saturday of the Annunciation, known as the Great Saturday of Light, 'Abdal Agha summoned the maphryono and ordered that he be killed. Others say that the maphryono was cast down from the roof of the monastery and died on April 5. 'Abdal Agha then asked Metropolitan Rizq Allah of Mosul, the maphryono's disciple, to officiate the unlawful marriage. He threatened to kill him if he disobeyed. Inflamed with zeal, the metropolitan began to rebuke the tyrant ('Abdal Agha) for his iniquity, sins, and hatred of Christianity. He said, "Do you think that I will cherish life after what has happened to my master, the martyr of truth?" The wicked 'Abdal Agha became outraged and ordered his slaves to torture the metropolitan. The slaves cut off his head with a sword. Many say that Almighty God honored his two faithful servants by a miracle. It is said that their venerable bodies were enveloped in heavenly light, which astonished those who were present. Even the Muslim Kurds regretted what they had done, but it was too late. Consequently, the Christians of Banim'im dispersed for fear of the tyranny of the wicked 'Abdal. Meanwhile, the people of Basibrina and Arbo wanted to gain possession of the bodies of the two martyrs. A tense controversy arose because of this matter until the clergy advised them to cast lots for the bodies. As a result, the people of Basibrina won the body of the maphryono and buried it in the Great Church of Mar Dodo. His grave is honored to this day. The people of Arbo took possession of the body of Metropolitan Rizq Allah and buried it in their Church at Mar Dumit. Both martyred clergymen were eulogized in Syriac and Arabic odes.

Maphryono Shim'un was undoubtedly the leading personality of his time in piety, virtue and knowledge. He was well versed in spiritual sciences and proficient in the Syriac and Kurdish languages. His Arabic, however, was unpolished. Because of his superb knowledge, some of his contemporaries represented him with comely attributes. The maphryono wrote several books of average quality. They are as follows:

- 1) The *Book of Theology* which he wrote in Syriac in 1719. We found a copy of it, written in his elegant handwriting, at the Monastery of Mar Awgen. It was translated into Arabic by Metropolitan Aslan in the mid-June, 1720.
- 2) *Silah al-Din wa Turs al-Yaqin* (The Armor of Religion and the Shield of the Certainty of Conviction), written in Syriac in response to the suggestion of some Syrians. It was translated into Arabic in 1723.



- 3) *Markabat al-Asrar al-Aqliyya* (The Chariot of Spiritual Mysteries), written in Syriac and was translated into Arabic by his disciple, Metropolitan Aslan, in 1727. Despite the valuable information they contain, these books are not free from tenuous and unacceptable ideas.
- 4) *A Syriac-Arabic Dictionary* compiled in 1728. It is a compendium of comprehensive dictionaries.
- 5) A book he wrote in eloquent Syriac, containing commentaries on the parable of the lost coin, the wings of the Seraphs, the Lord's Prayer, and other Gospel parables. It also contained a refutation of the purgatory and the explanation of eschatology. It consists of 200 pages. We came upon two copies of it at the villages of Kafra and Kafarboran in Tur 'Abdin.
- 6) *A Book of Homilies for the Whole Year*, consisting of 600 pages. It contains thirty-six homilies extending from the Sunday of the Consecration of the Church to the Sunday of Resurrection. Despite their average quality, these homilies are spiritually effective.
- 7) *A Syriac Anthology* of average quality. It contains a variety of important topics, most of which are on Repentance, composed in different meters. Some of them are short, while others are arranged in magnificent stanzas. The best-known of his odes is a lengthy one in which he laments the condition of the [Syrian] church due to its weak faith and the corrupt conduct of its members. It begins thus: "O Lord, who through his Son created the world from nothing . . ." Added to this are other odes (Zajaliyyas) in praise of the Virgin Mary, characterized by strophic form.

Maphryono Shim'un, may God honor him, had an elegant Syriac handwriting. Among his transcribed works are a Syriac copy of the Old Testament, a thick and magnificent volume, which he finished in 1718, and which is preserved at the Library of the Za'faran Monastery as No. 1; a Syriac Gospel in fine script which he finished in 1719; a *Book of Theology*, mentioned above; a breviary containing the seven times of prayer for monks, a copy of which is at the Monastery of Yuhanna of Tayy; and a liturgy and other compositions. Most of his writings are either in the possession of individuals, or deposited at the Libraries of the Monasteries of St. Mark and Za'faran and other monasteries.

This venerable ascetic had many pupils who learned from him the spiritual way of life. Most famous of them were Athanasius Aslan, metropolitan of Amid (1707–1741); Basilius Denha Baltaji of 'Arnas who succeeded him as Maphryono of Tur 'Abdin (1740–1780); and Metropolitan Rizq Allah of Mosul. This metropolitan, according to his own account, was born in the Qal'a district of the city of Mosul. His original name was 'Abd al-Razzaq, son of Matta the Carpenter. He was ordained a deacon in 1718 and became a monk at

the Monastery of Mar Matta in 1727. Then, he moved to the Monastery of Qartmin (Mar Gabriel), where he had resided at the beginning of his career. Later he moved to the Monastery of Mar Shim'un in the village of Arbo. In 1738, Maphryono Shim'un ordained him a metropolitan. He remained in the company of the maphryono until both of them were martyred in 1740, as was said earlier. We found in his handwriting several books at the Monastery of Mar Sharbil and other monasteries of Tur 'Abdin.

Maphryono Shim'un lived for seventy years, thirty of which were spent in the priesthood. He won the felicity of devotional life and the honor of martyrdom. May God sanctify his memory and benefit us by his supplications.

### **9- YUHANNA OF MARDIN, METROPOLITAN OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR ABHAI (1712–1729)<sup>19</sup>**

Yuhanna was born in Mardin. He became a monk and a priest. In 1712, Patriarch Ishaq ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of Mar Abhai, Gargar, and Hisn Mansur. Most likely, he resigned his position in 1714. An evidence of his resignation is that Metropolitan Ayyub (Job), who was ordained to succeed him, mentioned his name in his *Homologia*. Yuhanna was still living in 1729. However, his life's chronicle and the date of his death are unknown. He composed an ode in praise of Mar Theodore the martyr.

### **10- BASILIUS MATTA II, MAPHRYONO OF THE EAST (1713–1727)**

Basilus Matta was Iyawannis Matta, son of Li'azar, a brother of Patriarch Ishaq. His biography has already been listed among the bishops ordained by Patriarch Jirjis II. When the See of the Maphrianate became vacant with the death of Maphryono Li'azar III, his brother, Patriarch Ishaq, elevated him to this dignity (of Maphryono) at the Za'faran Monastery before September 1713, and called him Basilus Matta at his ordination. He was the second maphryono to bear this name. He administered his see for fourteen years and passed away in September, 1727. He was buried in the tomb of his brother the patriarch at the Church of Mar Tuma (Thomas) in Mosul. Basilus Matta was a venerable and pious father of the church.

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<sup>19</sup> *tr. note:* Also called the Monastery of Ladders, it is on the right bank of the Euphrates, a half-hour journey from the village of Urbish, near Karkar, an ancient citadel and town near Melitene (the present Malatya, Turkey).

### **11- GREGORIUS AYYUB (JOB), METROPOLITAN OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR ABHAI (1714–1740)**

Gregorius Ayyub was the son of Baghdasar. He was born in Amid, or in Hisn Mansur, as some say. He became a monk at the Za'faran Monastery, devoted himself to ascetic life and devotion, and was ordained a priest. After he became known for his piety, Patriarch Ishaq ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of the Monastery of Mar Abhai and called him Gregorius in December, 1714. He served his diocese for twenty-six years and then departed for eternal rest in 1740. He was buried in the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Hisn Mansur. In 1905, the church was renovated and the tomb of Gregorius Ayyub was set outside the nave. His congregation still discusses his piety and dignity.<sup>20</sup>

### **12- TIMOTHY 'ISA, METROPOLITAN OF THE ZA'FARAN MONASTERY AND MARDIN (1718–1743)**

Timothy 'Isa was the son of Ishaq, and his mother was Maryam. He had two brothers, Yaqub and Musa, and a sister, Alaria. He was born in Mosul and studied the Syriac language and religious sciences under the priest Matta and gained knowledge of both. At the end of the biographies of Patriarchs Jirjis II and Ishaq, he said that he was born around 1689. As he grew up, he expressed desire to personally meet Patriarch Jirjis, with the intention of studying under him and receiving the order of priesthood. But he could not fulfill this desire because the patriarch did not come to Mosul, and Timothy could not travel to see him. After the death of Patriarch Jirjis in 1708, his successor Patriarch Ishaq came to Mosul in 1709, and Timothy went to meet him. The patriarch understood Timothy's good intentions and ordained him a deacon and then a priest. Timothy remained in the patriarch's company. In 1718, the patriarch ordained him a metropolitan for the Za'faran Monastery and called him Timothy at his ordination despite his objection. Timothy said, "I remained in

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<sup>20</sup> The monk 'Abd al-Ahad of Ma'sarte, may God rest his soul in peace, sacrificed his life for the renovation of this church. It happened that when he went through the diocese of Swayrik collecting money for the renovation of the church, he was forced to stay one night at a Muslim Kurdish village. When he finished supper and retired to bed, his wicked host, with like-minded companions, attacked and killed him and his attendant and looted their belongings.

the company of the patriarch at the Za'faran Monastery, the Patriarchal Seat, until his death."<sup>21</sup>

In 1723, Timothy attended the synod convened at the Za'faran Monastery to choose and install Shukr Allah as patriarch. In 1725, he endeavored to buy the patriarchal residence at the church of the Arba'in (Forty Martyrs) in Mardin, which had been sold because of carelessness, and reassign it as an endowment to the church. In 1729, he exerted a great effort to build the Church of St. Theodore the martyr, the cost of whose building amounted to eight purses.<sup>22</sup> Patriarch Shukr Allah, assisted by Timothy, consecrated this church. Also, Timothy became a superior of the Monastery of Mar Matta, near Mosul, for two years (1737–1739), and then returned to his own diocese. In 1743, he passed away at the city of Aleppo and was buried in the Church of the Sayyida (Virgin Mary). He lived fifty-four years, twenty-five of which were spent in the service of the priesthood.

Timothy surpassed the fathers of his age in zeal, virtue, and ascetic living. He was well versed in the Syriac language. He translated into mediocre Arabic eight *busoyos* (supplicatory prayers) as mentioned in a prayer book at the Church of Mar Jirjis in Zahla, Lebanon. in the handwriting of a copyist named Musa who completed it in 1723. Also, he composed an ode in praise of the Virgin Mary, to whom the people of Mosul ascribed victory over the tyrant Tahmasb Khan Nadir Shah. It begins thus: "The Virgin Mary defeated the Persians." In 1730, he wrote in colloquial Arabic the biographies of Patrarchs Jirjis II, and Ishaq, in response to the request of some acquaintances. This was reported by Patriarch Ishaq himself, his teachers, and the elders at that time. He compiled a commentary on the Gospel known as "Cinnabar"<sup>23</sup> written by the learned Yaqub (Jacob) bar Salibi, metropolitan of Amid. In addition to commenting on it, he abridged some of its expositions by Basilus Barsoum II, of Ma'dan, Maphryono of the East (1454). Timothy copied this book in his elegant handwriting assisted by one Yeshu' of Qusur in 1713.

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<sup>21</sup> Actually, he remained in the company of Patriarch Ishaq until he resigned because of old age, or he may have accompanied him to Mosul where the patriarch died in the next year.

<sup>22</sup> The purse contained 500 piasters; the eight purses are worth today between 400 and 500 gold liras.

<sup>23</sup> The MS is in Manchester, England. Cinnabar is a Greek term for zinjafir, a sparkling, crumbly metal from which is derived red ink. The MS is so called because of the red ink used in it.

### **13- SEVERUS ELIAS, METROPOLITAN OF EDESSA (1718–1738)**

Severus was a native of Mardin. His father was Yuanna of the Akhras family, from which came his brother, Metropolitan Severus ‘Abd al-Ahad, who succeeded him in the See of Edessa (1757); Cyril Elias, metropolitan of the Monastery of Mar Abhai (1782–1791); and Cyril Shim’un, metropolitan of Edessa (1806–1817). He became a monk at the Za’faran Monastery and was ordained a priest. He joined the office of Patriarch Ishaq, who ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of Edessa and called him Severus at his ordination. He succeeded Metropolitan Severus Iliyya of Amid in 1718. Severus Elias was present at the election of Patriarch Shukr Allah in 1723. After serving his diocese for twenty years, he passed away in 1738 and was buried in the Great Church in Edessa.

### **14- DIOSCORUS AHO, METROPOLITAN OF THE JAZIRA (1718–?)**

Dioscorus Aho became a monk at the Za’faran Monastery and was ordained a priest in 1711. Patriarch Ishaq ordained him a metropolitan for Jazirat ibn ‘Umar and called him Dioscorus at his ordination in 1718. We have no knowledge of how many years he served or the date of his death.

### **15- GREGORIUS ‘ABD AL-AHAD, METROPOLITAN OF JERUSALEM (1719–1731)**

Gregorius ‘Abd al-Ahad was the son of the priest ‘Abd Allah of Amid. He was born in Diyarbakr and became a monk at the Monastery of the Sayyida (Virgin Mary) in Hattakh where he was also ordained a priest. In 1705, he became a superior of the Za’faran Monastery. After serving for fourteen years as a superior, he gained notoriety for his good conduct and administrative ability. Patriarch Ishaq ordained him a metropolitan for Jerusalem in 1719, to succeed Gregorius Shim’un, and called him Gregorius at his ordination. He was renowned for his pastoral zeal and for the renovation of the Monastery of St. Mark, his Metropolitan Seat. In 1726, he deputized the monk Yuhanna of Aleppo as superior of St. Mark. After serving his diocese for twelve years he departed this life on February 13, 1731, and was buried in the Church of the Forty (Martyrs) in Mardin. The date of his death is inscribed on his tomb. He was among the metropolitans who attended the election of Shukr Allah as a patriarch

## **16- IYAWANNIS KARAS, METROPOLITAN OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR BENAM (1722–1747)**

Karas was one of the most distinguished men of his time for sanctity and godliness. He was born in the village of Beth Khudayda (modern Qaraqosh) in the province of Mosul. His father was Behnam or Marbena, son of Yaghmur, and his mother was Zina. He had two brothers, the priest Yeshu' and Saliba, and four sisters: Helena, Sida, Sultana and Qusno. One of his relatives was Quryaqos of Khudayda who resided in Mosul and was a relative of Dionysius Behnam Samarchi, metropolitan of Mosul (1867–1911).

Karas was born around 1670. As a young man he studied the Syriac language and church sciences under the priest Yalda. In 1689, he entered the Monastery of Mar Behnam near his village and devoted himself to the study of spiritual sciences and monastic life. He was ordained a deacon in 1706 and assumed the monastic habit (as a novice). Meantime, he acquired a good knowledge of the Syriac language. For his spiritual virtue and activity, Patriarch Ishaq ordained him a metropolitan for the Monastery of Mar Behnam in 1722, calling him Iyawannis Karas at his ordination. In the next year, he attended the synod at the Za'faran Monastery (the Patriarchal Seat) for the election of Patriarch Shukr Allah, whom he endorsed. He administered his diocese for twenty-five years with apostolic zeal. In 1742, he endured the horrors of the warfare of the Persian Tahmasb Khan, known as Nadir Shah, who attacked Mosul and then Baghdad. While most of the people of Khudayda (Qaraqosh) fled to Mosul for refuge, Karas remained in his village with some natives. The Syrian people deposited their belongings and firewood at the Church of the Virgin. When the Persian army arrived in the village they cast fire into the church and destroyed it with the books and furnishings.

When the people of Mosul defeated the Persian enemy, the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud I issued a decree permitting the Christians to rebuild their ruined churches. Accordingly, the Syrian people of Mosul rebuilt eight churches, including the Church of Mar Tuma (St. Thomas) by the efforts of Metropolitan Cyril Jirjis son of 'Abd al-Jalil of Mosul; the Church of al-Tahira (The Virgin Mary) in the Qal'a district by effort of the notable 'Isa the Syrian in 1744; and the outer Church of al-Tahira near the 'Imadi Gate. Metropolitan Karas also endeavored to rebuild the Church of Mar Sarjis and Bakus in Qaraqosh. As crops were meager in that year, and hunger and hardships followed in the aftermath of the war, the metropolitan advised the people of the village (Qaraqosh) to go out into the open country and gather dry grass and chaff. They gathered abundant amounts of chaff to fire the gypsum needed for building. They had hardly finished the work when the chaff became exhausted. They reported the situation to Metropolitan Karas. Karas spent the night

praying, weeping and asking the Lord for divine help in order to finish the building of the church. God, may He be praised, answered the metropolitan's supplication by sending a strong wind which blew large quantities of chaff and straw from far away places to where the church stood. In the morning the people saw what had happened and began to praise God. They gathered the straw and used it for firing the gypsum. Thus, they completed the building of the church in 1744.

Also, by the great care of Metropolitan Karas, the people of Qaraqosh rebuilt the Church of the Virgin whose beauty was marred by fire as was said earlier. The metropolitan had already built the Churches of Mar Zaina and Mar Andrew in 1738. In 1739, he had a large cistern dug near the Church of Mar Gurgis and fortified it with bricks and stones. He prayed, and God filled the cistern with sweet water to the brim. The metropolitan donated money for this work from his own monastery.<sup>24</sup>

This church dignitary was well known for noble character, praiseworthy deeds, and helping the needy. Quite often, he sacrificed his own money and lawful rights to assist the afflicted and the poor. He had a tremendous reputation for goodness, piety and devotion. He was an example for his parishioners, whom he taught to seek refuge in God. His reputation was so praiseworthy that after his death accounts of it survived till our time. The most exclusive account of him was revealed to us by the priest 'Abd al-Ahad of Khudayda, (1864–1910). He (may God have mercy on him) was a pious and pure soul.

Karas departed to his Lord to receive the lot of the righteous, on Resurrection Day, April 20, 1747. He was buried in the tomb of the bishops at the Monastery of Mar Behnam. On his tomb is inscribed an epitaph in Syriac verse. He lived seventy-seven years, most of which he spent in the service of God. We came upon many of the books copied in his own handwriting in Mosul and its environs.

## **17- BASILIUS GURGIS, ECUMENICAL BISHOP (1722–1745)**

Basilus Gurgis was a son of Shim'un of Edessa, nephew of the Patriarch of Antioch 'Abd al-Masih I (1662–1686). He was born in Edessa at the end of the

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<sup>24</sup> Ba Khudayda (Beth Khudayda or Qaraqosh) is a large village near Mosul. In 1747 it had twenty-one priests and eighty deacons serving six churches. In the possession of the Syrian Orthodox were the Churches of Mar Sarjis and Bakus, and St. Shmuni the Maccabean, and her martyred children, and a monastery near the village, some of whose buildings are in ruins. The Churches of the Virgin, Mar Zaina, and Mar Andrew were usurped by a seceding group (Syrian Catholics).

seventeenth century and became a novice monk at the Za'faran Monastery where he also was ordained a priest. He studied under Patriarch Ishaq who, after testing his aptitude, ordained him a metropolitan in 1722. In the next year, along with other bishops, he attended the synod which elected Patriarch Shukr Allah. The new patriarch, who assigned him the diocese of Aleppo, changed his name to Dionysius following the tradition of his predecessors, for bishops of Aleppo had used this name since the last decade of the sixteenth century. Basilus administered his diocese for eighteen years, following the path of righteousness, until he ascended the Patriarchal Throne in 1745. The rest of his account will follow shortly.



### 3 PATRIARCH IGNATIUS SHUKR ALLAH (1723–1745)

Shukr Allah ascended the patriarchal throne in July 1723,<sup>25</sup> and passed away on Sunday September 15, 1745. His patriarchal period was twenty-three years, one month and twenty-six days. He was seventy-one years old.

Shukr Allah was the son of Maqdisi Yuhanna, son of Ni'mat Allah San'ia. Among those of his family who flourished were his two nephews, Gregorius Barsoum, metropolitan of Jerusalem (1729–1737); and Cyril Gurgis, metropolitan of Mardin and then Amid (1730–1747), and their nephew the priest Iliyya (Elijah), son of Yuhanna Sani'a a priest of the Church of Shmuni the Maccabean in Mardin. Iliyya was ordained a deacon in June 1746 by Patriarch Jirjis III, and a priest by the Maphryono Gurgis III on March 7, 1764. He was still living in 1767

Patriarch Shukr Allah was born in Mardin around 1674. The account of his early life was recorded above, namely that in his youth he became a monk and was ordained a priest. He was attached to Patriarch Ishaq and accompanied him on his wearisome journeys to Constantinople and other places to obtain permission from the Ottoman sultans to rebuild the churches of Mardin in 1701. He was ordained by Patriarch Ishaq a metropolitan for the diocese of Aleppo with the name of Dionysius. Furthermore, the account above included his commendable endeavor in building the Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem, assisted by Metropolitan Shim'un, at the end of 1717 and the beginning of the next year. He endured hardships during his banishment to the island of Arwad for his defense of the orthodox faith in 1720.<sup>26</sup>

His achievements as a metropolitan included regulating the table of movable and immovable feasts to determine the dates of Lent and of movable major feasts, in response to the order of Patriarch Ishaq. For this project, Shukr

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<sup>25</sup> *tr. note:* Patriarch Ishaq retired his position in 1723 and passed away the next year. Patriarch Shukr Allah was elected the year Ishaq retired.

<sup>26</sup> See *Al-Majalla Al-Patriarchiyya* 5 (1938), 254.

Allah chose an expert clergyman from his own diocese, the Chorepiscopus Eкономus Yuhanna, son of Maqdisi Mansur of Homs (1698–1718?). He (Shukr Allah) abridged the table in order to render it easy to use. He introduced it with a preface written in a firm style. It began thus: “Thanks be to God, who enlightened the minds of men by the soundness of faith.” Most likely, he regulated it in 1714.<sup>27</sup>

Upon the resignation of Patriarch Ishaq [in 1722] because of old age, a synod met at the Za’faran Monastery, comprised of Mar Basilus Shim’un, Maphryono of Tur ‘Abdin and the Jazira; Gregorius ‘Abd al-Ahad, metropolitan of Jerusalem; Athanasius Aslan, metropolitan of Amid; Gregorius Ayyub (Job), metropolitan of the diocese of Mar Abhai (Gargar); Timothy ‘Isa, metropolitan of the Za’faran Monastery and Mardin; Severus Elias, metropolitan of Edessa; Basilus Gurgis, metropolitan of the patriarchal office; and Basilus Ibrahim, formerly bishop of Bushairiyya, and others. The bishops chose (by consent of the resigning patriarch) Dionysius Shukr Allah, metropolitan of Aleppo, as patriarch. Maphryonon Shimu’n acted as the ordainer and master of the consecration ceremony.

Shukr Allah was ordained a Patriarch of Antioch, assuming the name Ignatius Shukr Allah, at the Church of Mar Hananya on July 20, 1722. After the ceremony ended, Iyawannis Karas, metropolitan of the Monastery of Mar Behnam and Ba Khudayda (Qaraqosh), arrived and added his vote to that of the holy synod and signed the document of the election of the new patriarch. The inscription on the seal of the patriarch read thus: “Ignatius Shukr Allah, the weak, Patriarch of Antioch.” It was followed in Arabic by the words, “My good fortune is in the hands of God, of whom I, Patriarch Shukr Allah, am only a servant, 1723.”<sup>28</sup>

The new patriarch obtained the decree of investiture from Sultan Ahmad III in the year 1136 AH/1723 AD. He devoted his attention to the management of the holy church with avid vigor and zeal, following in the footsteps of his predecessor. In the next year, he convened a synod at Amid to

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<sup>27</sup> A copy is at our library, attached to *The Lamp of Sanctuaries* (by Bar Hebraeus). Another copy is at the British Museum, MS 725

<sup>28</sup> We have already mentioned in the biography of Patriarch Ishaq that he resigned his position in 1723 after serving fourteen years and six months. We said this relying on the date of Patriarch Shukr Allah’s seal. However, after full scrutiny of this subject, we found that the correct date was not 1723 but 1722, and that although the date on the seal was obviously clear, it was inscribed after the issuance of the sultan’s decree of investiture. Therefore, the period of the service of Patriarch Ishaq was thirteen years, five months and twelve days.

regulate the document of faith which began thus: "Praise be to God, who enhanced the position of those in charge to train his congregation."<sup>29</sup> The manuscripts of Edessa, which were transferred to Aleppo, contain a manifesto of the creed which he wrote in 1716, while still a bishop, to explain the veracity of the faith of the Syrian Orthodox Church in response to the request of some Syrian notables in Jerusalem. This manifesto was endorsed by Patriarch Ishaq upon his visit to Aleppo in 1718. Patriarch Shukr Allah appointed the deacon Saliba, son of Tumajan of Edessa, as his deputy in Constantinople. Tumajan was an active man endowed with elegant Arabic handwriting.<sup>30</sup>

Patriarch Shukr Allah resided mostly in Diyarbakr. In 1723, he assisted Metropolitan Basilius Gurgis of Aleppo, of the diocese of Diyarbakr, in building the Monastery of Mar Quryaqus in Bushairiyya. In 1728, he renovated the nave and altars of the Za'faran Monastery and furnished and decorated the Patriarchal chapel. He adorned its nave and consecrated it in the names of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Also, he restored its vineyards and built stone hedges around them. In 1734, he devoted most of his time to the building of the Monastery of the Prophet Mar Iliyya (Elijah) near the village of Qanqart in the province of Diyarbakr. He renovated its cells, rooms, and utilities. He devised a project to cause the water of the western spring to flow to the foot of the mountain, to make it easy for the monastery to benefit from it. He accomplished this project in one full year, 1735.<sup>31</sup>

In 1725, he had the rights of the Church of Mar Tuma (Thomas) at the village of Qutrubul legally registered with the agreement of the eight priests of the church and the village notables. His intention was to settle the debts incurred by the churches at that time. He did this once more in 1729. He summoned the priests and urged them to regulate the income of the church's revenues yielded by endowment properties and religious services. He separated this revenue from their individual incomes. In 1728, he revived the tithes of the Za'faran Monastery, which he received through special patriarchal collections by the Church of Qal'at al-Imra'a, in addition to collections and portions of the

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<sup>29</sup> Manchester, MSS Mingana, 460 and 495.

<sup>30</sup> Deacon Tumajan was a pupil of Patriarch Shukr Allah. He was ordained a deacon before 1724 and died in 1746. We came upon two books he transcribed in Syriac and in Garshuni (Arabic written in Syriac script), dated 1724 and 1726. One of them was dedicated to the Chorepiscopus Yeshu' Hamzo of Qutrubul (d. 1758). Tumajan donated to the church of Edessa the magnificent *Book of the Eastern Homologia* (Confession of Faith), handwritten by the deacon 'Abd Allah of Bartulli, which he copied for the Metropolitan Gabriel of Bartulli of blessed memory.

<sup>31</sup> See an article we wrote later about the history of this monastery.

income yielded by major festivals and religious services. He also appointed a deputy to collect and regulate the fees of religious services and the yield of the endowments of its church. He then paid a pastoral visits to the diocese of Mosul, the Monastery of Mar Matta, the Monastery of Mar Behnam and Bushairiyya.

Patriarch Shukr Allah obtained a certificate of investiture in his own name from Sultan Ahmad III. This investiture, dated 6 Rabi' al-Akhir 1135 AH/1723 AD, was addressed to the (Muslim) judge of Hisn Kipha for the purpose of exempting the Monastery of Mar Quryaqos in Zarjal from fees and tithes. Also, he obtained a second certificate of investiture from the same sultan, dated 24 Shawwal 1141 AH/June, 1739 AD, addressed to the Wali (governor) of Damascus and its judge, to protect the Monastery of Mar Julian in the village of al-Qaryatain and stop anyone from interfering in its affairs or committing an act of aggression against it.<sup>32</sup>

Realizing that his flock was ignorant of the Syriac language and that certain heresies had spread within it, Patriarch Shukr Allah endeavored to enlighten the clergy and laymen by the dissemination of religious knowledge. He searched Syriac theological books, selected what he found profitable, and charged the efficient teacher-monk, 'Abd al-Nur, son of Ni'mat Allah of Amid, with translating them into Arabic. 'Abd al-Nur translated the books of the learned Mar Moses Bar Kipha, bishop of Baramman and Mosul (d. 903), including his treatises on the Soul, Resurrection, Paradise, and Angels, and a treatise on the Devils by the learned Iyawaanis, metropolitan of Dara (860). He spent a large amount of money to accomplish this project. The translator finished the work in 1729, and the translated books were circulated (among the Syrians). Some of them were copied by chief clerics and monks.<sup>33</sup> 'Abd al-Nur also translated, in 1723, a book entitled *The Cause of all Causes* by an anonymous Edessan bishop.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, Metropolitan Athanasius Aslan of Amid copied a thick volume of the *Commentary on Divine Mysteries* by Bar Kipha and other learned fathers of the church in 1726.

The compiler of the roster of bishops records that Patriarch Shukr Allah encountered a Chaldean patriarch at Amid, a follower of the Latins (Roman Catholics) deceiving the simple folk of the church. He opposed him and complained to the government about his actions. The government cast him into prison and then sent him into exile. Ten years later the Chaldean patriarch

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<sup>32</sup> Source: The records of the Za'faran Monastery.

<sup>33</sup> MSS in Diyarbakr and 'Arans in Tur 'Abdin.

<sup>34</sup> Some writers have erroneously ascribed this book to Mar Jacob of Edessa.

returned to Amid. This time, however, he abstained from adversarial actions and won the patriarch's favor.<sup>35</sup>

After administering the church of God for twenty-three years and fifty-seven days, Mar Shukr Allah departed to his Lord on Sunday September 15, 1745. His funeral service was undertaken by Metropolitan Gregorius Tuma of Jerusalem. He was buried next to the tomb of Patriarch 'Abd al-Masih I at the mausoleum of the fathers outside the Rum Gate west of Amid. On his grave an epitaph was inscribed in Garshuni as follows: "Patriarch Shukr Allah is transported from this world of misery to a joyful and eternal abode on September 15, 2056 of the Greeks/1745 AD. May God have mercy on him. Amen."

The burial of these two great dignitaries, Patriarch Shukr Allah and Patriarch Jirjis III, in a common cemetery was due to difficult circumstances, especially the tyranny of the rulers of that time. Patriarch Shukr Allah was seventy-one years old, having spent most of them in the service of God and his flock. After his death, the Apostolic See went vacant for twenty-eight days.

In his time, the king of Persia twice attacked the cities of Mosul and Mardin. The first was in 1732; the Persian army was commanded by the Vizier Turkus Khan who devastated the populated villages and destroyed the Nestorian Monastery of Sa'id. The natives of Mosul fought back and defeated his army, which took flight. The next time, King Nadir Shah, or Tahmasb Shah, who was formerly known as Quli Khan, marched in 1734 with a great army.<sup>36</sup> First, he attacked the cities of Kirkuk and Arbil, and many villages of the province of Mosul. He never hesitated to commit tyrannical acts of looting, killing and burning. When he reached Mosul, he cast many cannonballs against

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<sup>35</sup> This Chaldean patriarch, called Yusuf Marrogi, took charge of the Chaldeans in Amid in 1714. He began to sow the seeds of sedition in 1728, and for this reason he was imprisoned and then went to Rome in 1731. He returned to Amid in 1741 and passed away in 1759.

<sup>36</sup> The author of *Qamus al-A'lam* (Dictionary of Prominent Men) Vol. 6 says that Nadir Shah was the son of a shepherd from the tribe of Afshar in Khurasan. He was born in 1687 and followed his father as a shepherd. He gathered friends around him and proceeded to intercept and pillage caravans. He succeeded in capturing Khurasan and expelling the Afghans from Isfahan and installed Tahmasb II on the throne of the Safawids, his ancestors. He became Tahmasb's Vizier and then removed him and installed in his place his son Abbas III. Upon Abbas's death, Tahmasb succeeded him to the throne and called himself Nadir Shah Tahmasb. He conquered Afghanistan and Baluchistan, then marched against India and captured Delhi. He was not known for his justice or administrative ability. He died in 1747 and was succeeded by some weaklings of his posterity, namely 'Adil Shah and Ibrahim. Finally, his family existed no more.

it, but the people, due to the excellent administration of the Wali (governor), Hajj Husayn Pasha al-Jalili of Mosul,<sup>37</sup> resisted him heroically; this astonished the enemy and forced Tahmasb to abandon the siege of the city. He departed for Jazirat ibn 'Umar and played havoc by looting, killing, and taking captives. He returned once more to Mosul but failed to capture it. He fled, having lost 5400 soldiers. The natives of Mosul lost only a few men. Tahmasb signed a peace agreement with the people of Mosul and departed. The triumph of the people was ascribed to a great miracle by the Virgin Mary (who defended the city). As a result, the churches of Mosul were renovated and rebuilt.<sup>38</sup>

Patriarch Shukr Allah had a melodious voice. He was one of the foremost of the fathers who strove to enliven the religious conscience of the Syrian Orthodox people. He was courageous and very patient in enduring harm. He benefitted the church both in word and deed. He composed twenty-four homilies, some of them when he was a metropolitan. He wrote them in Arabic in an unrefined style similar to that used by his contemporaries, who were not well versed in this language. He also composed some religious songs. He built the Church of Mar Theodorus in the village of Mansuriyya with the assistance of Timothy 'Isa of Mosul, metropolitan of Mardin, and consecrated it in 1729. Further, he built other churches, including those of Saints Mar Zaina and Andrew in Qaraqosh, with the help of the priest 'Abd al-Masih of Khudayda in 1738; the Church of Mar Sarjis and Bakus, also in Qaraqosh, with the help of Iyawannis Karas, metropolitan of the Monastery of Mar Behnam in 1744; the two Churches of al-Tahira (The Virgin Mary) and Mar Tuma (St. Thomas) in Mosul in 1744; the Church of Mar Saba in the eastern part of the village of Khankah in 1742; the Church of Mar Gurgis in the village of Randwan (Ridwan) in 1744;<sup>39</sup> and the Church of Mar Theodorus the martyr in Sadad in 1745, which was renovated in 1885. He consecrated the Holy Chrism at the monastery of the Patriarchal Seat (the Za'faran Monastery) and donated to it a Gospel in the handwriting of the priest 'Abd al-Nur of Amid. Finally, Patriarch Shukr Allah ordained seventeen chief priests, two of whom became maphryonos. They were as follows:

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<sup>37</sup> The Jalilis successively ruled Mosul for 150 years. Twelve walis rose from among them, beginning with Isma'il Pasha and ending with Amin Pasha II (1724–1846)

<sup>38</sup> *tr. note:* I.e., Because of the miracle, the Wali allowed the Christians to renovate their churches.

<sup>39</sup> These last two churches are located at the plain of Bahmard.

## **1- DIOSCORUS 'ABD AL-NUR, METROPOLITAN OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR MUSA (1725–1731)**

Dioscorus 'Abd al-Nur was the son of Hidaya of Aleppo. He became a monk at the Monastery of Mar Musa the Abyssinian in al-Nabk, where he was elevated to the priesthood before 1717. He studied under Patriarch Shukr Allah when he was still a metropolitan and accompanied him on a visit to Jerusalem in 1717. When the See of the Monastery of Mar Musa became vacant, Patriarch Shukr Allah ordained him a metropolitan and called him Dioscorus 'Abd al-Nur at his ordination. It is also said that he called him Cyril after July, 1725. Dioscorus 'Abd al-Nur served his diocese for seven or eight years and was still living on June 11, 1731. He may have died between this year and the year 1732. We came upon some books written by him on Baptism, the Consecration of Weddings and the Sacrament of Unction, at the church of Aleppo. They were written in his rather average handwriting, and completed in 1724.

## **2- DIOSCORUS SARUKHAN, ECUMENICAL BISHOP AND THEN BISHOP OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR MUSA (1727–1769)**

Dioscorus Sarukhan was born in Mardin in 1659. His father was 'Abd Yesu'.<sup>40</sup> He acquired a smattering of church sciences and was ordained a deacon before 1702. Upon becoming a widower, he renounced the world and desired the life of piety. He entered the Za'faran Monastery and was ordained a novice monk and then a priest before 1716. He pursued a life of virtue, which led Patriarch Shukr Allah to ordain him a bishop with the name of Dioscorus Sarukhan at his ordination in 1727. He was sixty-eight years old when the signs of old age began to appear on his features. When the diocese of al-Nabk became vacant with the death of its shepherd, Metropolitan 'Abd al-Nur of Aleppo, the patriarch entrusted Sarukhan with its administration in 1722. He managed the diocese efficiently for thirty-seven years. He followed commendable rules of life and left a memorable legacy in the monastery where he trained a group of monks, five of whom became metropolitans. But hardships, suffering, affliction, adversity, and persecution did not deter him from putting his life into proper order, nor did they diminish his determination, even in old age. Once he was evicted from his metropolitan office for two years and resided at Sadad, but then returned to his monastery. The first thing he did was to restore

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<sup>40</sup> This is according to a copy of the Old Testament in bad Garshuni script found in a shop at the town of Zakho, Iraq, dated 1712. At that time, Sarukhan was a deacon and had lived 53 years. See Za'faran MS, no. 4.

Julius Zmaria to his office as bishop of the Monastery of Mar Julian, after he was deprived of his episcopacy for many years.<sup>41</sup>

Dioscorus Sarukhan, may God be gracious to him, was diligent in prayer and fasting. He loathed the hoarding of money. He loved the poor and the miserable. He was compassionate toward the afflicted, orphans, and widows. He never sent away hungry those who came to his door. Neither did he send away anyone who asked for help empty-handed. For this reason, his contemporaries described him as the refuge of the poor, the troubled, and strangers. And when Metropolitan Cyril Jirjis of the Monastery of Mar Julian and Homs was transferred to the diocese of Jerusalem in 1748, his diocese was incorporated into that of Sarukhan.

Sarukhan ordained many deacons and priests, three of them for the church of Aleppo. He died on February 11, 1769, being 110 years old, forty-two of which were spent as a chief priest. He was buried at the southern part of the Church of Mar Sarjis and Bakus with no date on his gravestone. He was elegized by his loyal student, Bishop Ibrahim al-Yaziji of Sadad, in an ode composed in the Ephramite meter (a seven-syllable meter). It begins thus: "In the year 2080 of the Greeks/1769 AD." To the north wing of the altar of the Church of Mar Sarkis is fixed a portrait of Sarukhan with his name inscribed beneath it. It shows that he, may God be compassionate to him, was short of stature but handsome. He appears to wear a turban, which is actually a long fez wrapped by several folds of shawl. We were told by more than one native of Sadad that the portraits of saints and fathers that adorn the Churches of Mar Sarkis and Mar Jirjis were drawn by Metropolitan Sarukhan. But we think that the artist was Bishop Ibrahim al-Yaziji, as we shall mention later in his biography. It is unlikely that a man as old as Metropolitan Sarukhan was able to draw portraits.

### **3- GREGORIUS LI'AZAR, METROPLITAN OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR MATTA (1728–1730)**

Gregorius Li'azar was born in Mosul. His father, the priest Yaqub, and his grandfather, the Maqdisi 'Azar, have already been mentioned. Gregorius was the nephew of Patriarch Ishaq and of Maphryono Matta II, of blessed memory. After he had received education in church sciences, his uncle Patriarch Ishaq, ordained him a deacon for the Church of Mar Tuma in 1720. He then became a monk at the Monastery of Mar Matta. He was ordained a priest by his uncle the Maphryono Matta II, and then became abbot of this monastery. Upon the

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<sup>41</sup> See *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya* 5, no. 3 (1938), 143.



death of the maphryono, Patriarch Shukr Allah ordained Li'azar, at the Za'faran Monastery, as metropolitan of the Monastery of Mar Matta and called him Gregorius Li'azar at his ordination on the Day of Annunciation, March 25, 1728. After he had served his diocese for two years and six months, the patriarch ordained him a Maphryono of the East as shall be seen later.

#### **4- JULIUS BARSOUM, ECUMENICAL METROPOLITAN OF THE PATRIARCHAL OFFICE (1729–1737)**

Julius Barsoum Sani'a was nephew of Patriarch Shukr Allah. He was born in Mardin and became a monk at the Monastery of Mar Hananya (Za'fran Monastery) where he gained a knowledge of religious sciences. After he had served as a monk for a period of time, his uncle, the patriarch, ordained him an ecumenical metropolitan and called him Julius Barsoum in 1729. On his insignia was inscribed the following: "Julius Barsoum, Ecumenical Metropolitan: O Eternal One, have mercy on Metropolitan Barsoum. 1729." Upon the death of Gregorius 'Abd al-Ahad, metropolitan of Jerusalem, the patriarch chose Julius Barsoum to fill the vacant see of Jerusalem. He changed his name to Gregorius, according to the accepted tradition at that time, in the middle of 1731. He administered his diocese for six years and died in 1737. His name is inscribed on the Holy of Holies of the Monastery of St. Mark; it is gilded with gold which was donated by the Maqdisi Barsoum of Aleppo, the Syrian, in 1723. May God have mercy on him.<sup>42</sup>

#### **5- CYRIL GURGIS, ECUMENICAL METROPOLITAN OF THE PATRIARCHAL OFFICE (1730–1747)**

Gurgis Sani'a was a nephew of Patriarch Shukr Allah and a brother of Metropolitan Gregorius Barsoum. He was born and raised in Mardin. He desired the monastic life and became a monk at the Monastery of Mar Hananya, and was ordained a priest. We found his name among the monks of the monastery in 1727. In 1730 his uncle, the patriarch, ordained him a metropolitan for the Patriarchal Office and called him Cyril Gurgis at his ordination. The patriarch entrusted him with the administration of the monastery of the Patriarchal Seat (the Za'faran Monastery) and Mardin in 1734, after transferring his predecessor Metropolitan Timothy 'Isa to the Monastery of Mar Matta. Cyril administered his diocese for nine years, up to 1745.

We found in the *Office of Ordinations* at the Za'faran Monastery, MS 222, a statement that Cyril ordained seventeen priests and eighty-two deacons for the

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. the St. Mark MS 212, containing the history of the monastery.

churches of the Za'faran Monastery, Mardin, and the villages of Qusur, Banabil, Ibrahimiyya and Qellith. Of these deacons, five were ordained for Mosul, and two for the churches of Edessa and Kharput from 1730 to 1745. In 1739, Cyril had a big silver cross made for the Church of St. Asya at the village of Mansuriyya, whose priests were Safar, Isbahan and Habib.<sup>43</sup> His insignia were inscribed only in Syriac. In October, 1745, he attended the synod convened at Diyarbakr to elect and install Jirjis III of Edessa, a patriarch. The new patriarch transferred Cyril to the diocese of Amid, which he administered for two years. He died at Mardin in 1747.

## 6- BASILIUS LI'AZAR, MAPHYONO OF THE EAST (1730–1759)

Basilius Liazar, already mentioned, was metropolitan of the Monastery of Mar Matta. After he had served his diocese for two years and six months, Patriarch Shukr Allah elevated him to the office of the Maphrianate of the East and called him Basilius Li'azar. He was the fourth maphryonon with this name. His ordination ceremony, which took place at the Za'faran Monastery in October, 1730, was attended by Julius Barsoum and Cyril Gurgis, the two metropolitans of the Patriarchal Office. The *systaticon* (document of election) authorized him as a Maphryono of Mosul with its two Churches of Mar Tuma and al-Tahira (the Virgin), together with the churches of Bartulli, Ba'shiqa, Bahzani, Summail and Zakho,<sup>44</sup> except the Monasteries of Mar Matta and Mar Behnam, which were bishopric sees. He was made a maphryono with the proviso that he should not ordain a metropolitan or clothe a monk with the monastic habit without first consulting with the patriarch.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> This information is taken from a copy of the Gospel at the Church of Mansuriyya

<sup>44</sup> *tr. note:* The village of Summail was heavily populated by Syrians. In it, the deacon Denha son of the priest Behnam of Bartulli, transcribed the book of grammar written in verse by the Metropolitan Yaqub Shakko (Shabbo) of Bartulli in 1677. Also, at the same village, the martyr, Metropolitan Rizq Allah of Mosul, while still a monk, copied the *Service Book of Passion Week* for the Church of Bartulli in 1736. The church of Zakho was named after the Virgin Mary, and a deacon was ordained for it in 1783. It was mentioned by Patriarch Yunan in his letter to Metropolitan Musa of the Monastery of Mar Matta on September 16, 1817. A man told us that he saw a book of ordinations in Vienna, capital of Austria, which mentioned the churches of the villages of Summail and the Qadiyya. The people of Bartulli told us that all the Syrian natives of Summail removed to Bartulli, as did the natives of the village of Basakhraya.

<sup>45</sup> We found this *systaticon* in 1911, but, like other books, it was damaged.

Basilius proceeded to his diocese where he resided most of the time at the Church of Mar Ahodemeh in Mosul, and sometimes at the Monastery of Mar Matta. In his time the countries of the East were afflicted with many adversities, the worst of which was the campaign of Nadir Shah Tahmasb Khan, king of the Persians, against Mosul in the summer of 1743. It ended in the triumph of the citizens of the city and the defeat of the Persian, as has been mentioned earlier. Then, the churches of Mosul, namely, the Church of Mar Tuma, the Church of the Tahira (the Virgin Mary), at the Qal'a district, and the Church of the Virgin Mary outside Mosul, near the 'Imadi Gate, were renovated in 1744 and 1745.

Contemporary historians relate that in 1756 the country of Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia) suffered severe cold weather. The River Tigris froze in the winter, and people and animals crossed over it. Furthermore, Diyarbakr suffered from hunger due to exorbitant prices (of food), and the calamity extended to Mosul. In 1757, swarms of locusts swept the crops at the beginning of the harvest and consumed both dry and green grass. As a result, cattle perished and people scattered throughout the land. Destitute people dropped dead on the streets from starvation. In the next year (1758), the Muslims usurped the metropolitan office at the Church of Mar Ahodemeh and converted it to a masjid, which still exists. In 1759, the plague created havoc in Mosul and its environs and tens of thousands of people perished. In the fall of this year, Maphryono Li'azar IV died and was buried, most likely in the grave of his uncle and predecessor Maphryono Matta II at the Church of Mar Tuma, having administered his diocese for twenty-nine years. In his time seventeen priests were in Mosul, eight of them at the Church of Mar Tuma and nine at the church of al-Tahira (the Virgin).<sup>46</sup>

## **7- IYAWANNIS TUMA, ECUMENICAL BISHOP, AND THEN BISHOP OF DAMASCUS (1730–1752)**

Tuma, son of Denha, was born in Amid but is commonly said to have come from Tur 'Abdin. His mother was La'la, a native of Amid. Upon becoming a widower, he became a monk at the Za'faran Monastery and devoted himself to the life of asceticism. He was ordained a priest before 1716 and acquired some knowledge of the Syriac language. He was zealous in his study of this language and expressed sorrow for the dispersion of some of its books. He was also distressed over the fact that the Syrians had relinquished Syriac for the Arabic

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<sup>46</sup> *tr. note:* Here the original text is interrupted by an article on the Monastery of Mar Iliyya.

language. He was intent on acquiring and reading Syriac books. In 1722, he kept close to the metropolitan office of Amid, and in 1727, he was appointed a superior of the Za'faran Monastery. At the end of 1730, Patriarch Shukr Allah ordained him an ecumenical bishop, calling him Iyawannis Tuma at his ordination. Before the following May, he assigned him the diocese of Damascus as a successor of its bishop, 'Abd al-Azali, and called him Gregorius. He administered his diocese properly and delivered beneficial spiritual homilies. In 1737, he attended at the Za'faran Monastery the ordination of Metropolitan Jirjis of Aleppo for the diocese of the Monastery of Mar Julian. He was at Aleppo in 1749.

Iyawannis Tuma translated from the Syriac into Arabic the *busoyas* for Lent (supplicatory prayers), a copy of which is at the Church of Mar Gurgis, in the handwriting of the priest Stephen Qaddah, dated 1737. Also, he wrote by hand, in common Arabic, homilies for the whole year. A complete copy of this translation is at the Library of St. Mark, MS 174. It consists of eighty-four homilies. We also found in his handwriting at the same library a translation of the *Ethicon* of Bar Hebraeus in Garshuni, MS 188, which he finished at the Za'faran Monastery on March 20, 1724. He also copied a *Commentary on the Psalms* by Daniel of Salah, which he completed on February 2, 1730.<sup>47</sup> At Midyat, there is a copy of *Silah al-Din*, by Maphryono Shim'un which Iyawannis completed at the village of Rashayya on October 20, 1731.

After administering his diocese for some twenty-one years, he passed away at Damascus. I could not find the date of his death, which probably occurred in 1753 or 1754.

## **8- ATHANASIUS TUMA, METROPOLITAN OF THE PATRIARCHAL CELL (OFFICE) AND LATER OF JERUSALEM (1731–1748)**

Athanasius Tuma was born in Mosul. His father was Elias al-Banna (the mason). He entered the Monastery of Mar Matta and assumed the monastic habit. He studied religious sciences and was ordained a priest shortly before 1710. He was chosen to be the abbot of the monastery for a short time. In 1717, or 1719, he resided at the Monastery of Mar Behnam and then returned to his Monastery of Mar Matta. In 1721, he joined the retinue of Patriarch Ishaq, who sent him to Bedlis to collect the patriarchal tithes. He resided for a while at the Monastery of Mar Iliyya (Elijah), in the neighborhood of Qanqart, in the province of Amid. In 1731, Patriarch Shukr Allah ordained him an

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<sup>47</sup> *tr. note:* Daniel of Salah was a sixth-century father of the church who may have died in 542. See Barsoum, *Al-Lulu al-Manthur* (*Scattered Pearls*), 294-295.

ecumenical metropolitan for the Patriarchal Office and called him Athanasius Tuma. For a while, he resided at the Monastery of Mar Iliyya and witnessed its renovation, which was completed in 1735 by the assiduous effort of the patriarch, as he himself related. When the See of Jerusalem became vacant following the death of Metropolitan Gregorius Sani'a in 1737, the patriarch assigned Athanasius Tuma to that see and changed his name to Gregorius. He handed him a *ysstacion* (Document of Election or Investiture), signed by the patriarch together with Metropolitan Timothy 'Isa, Dionysius Gurgis, metropolitan of Aleppo, and Gregorius Ayyub (Job), metropolitan of Hisn Mansur, in 1738. Like his late predecessors, Tuma resided at the Za'faran Monastery. In 1745, he witnessed the death of Patriarch Shukr Allah at Amid and was in charge of his funeral. Also, he presided over the synod that elected Patriarch Jirjis III and acted as the ordainer of the new patriarch. In this year (1745), he ordained two priests, Matlub and 'Abd al-Ahad, for the church of Jazirat ibn 'Umar. Three years later, in 1748, he passed away and was buried in the Church of Mar Behnam in the mausoleum of the fathers, behind the right wing of the altar. We saw his grave in 1910, on which is inscribed (in raised Garshuni script on lime), "This is the tomb of Metropolitan Tuma."

Tuma served the priesthood ably for seventeen years. At the Monastery of Mar Matta, we found (in his own handwriting) a *Service Book for the Resurrection Day, Syriac Hymns for Lent*, completed in 1711; the book of *The Cause of all Causes* in Garshuni script, completed in 1728 in answer to the request of the monks Jirjis al-Fattal of Aleppo (this book is now in the possession of Timothy Tuma, metropolitan of Midyat); and the book of *The Chariot of Mysteries* by Maphryono Shim'un which he transcribed at the Za'faran Monastery in 1729. It is now at the Library of Edinburgh College (University).

## **9- GREGORIUS BOGHOS (PAUL), ECUMENICAL METROPOLITAN AND THEN METROPOLITAN OF BUSHAIRIYYA (1732–1764)**

Boghos was a native of Gargar. His father was the deacon Harun (Aaron) and his mother was Gulistan (a compound name of Perisan and Turkish meaning "flower garden"). He was called by the Armenian name Boghos because of his mingling with the Armenians of his town. Boghos means Paul. As a youth he devoted himself to worship. He entered the Za'faran Monastery, where he studied spiritual science and became a monk around 1719. He spent some time in copying books. We found in his handwriting at the Monastery of Mar Quryaqos a *Service Book for the Resurrection Day* which he completed in 1722. At the Library of the Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem, there is a *Book of Ordinations* partially copied by him and was completed by Metropolitan Yuhanna in 1724. At the Library of Manchester, MS 562, there is *The Book of the*

*Questions of Saints Basilus and Gregorius* and the book of *The Cause of all Causes*, which he completed on June 22, 1729.

In 1722, Boghos was ordained a metropolitan by Patriarch Shukr Allah and was called Gregorius at his ordination. The patriarch entrusted him with the administration of the diocese of the Bushairiyya around 1737,<sup>48</sup> which he administered for twenty-seven years and for which he ordained priests and deacons.

We found in the *Book of Ordinations*, already mentioned, that from 1740 to 1757 Gregorius Boghos ordained for his diocese and for the diocese of Bedlis fourteen priests and sixteen deacons. Also, he transcribed a Gospel for the Monastery of Mar Quryaqos, had its covers studded with silver, and bequeathed it as an endowment to the same monastery. He died at his monastery in 1764. Among his students was the Armenian monk Shim'un who succeeded him as a metropolitan of his see.

#### **10- CYRIL FARAJ ALLAH, METROPOLITAN OF MA'DAN (1732–1756)**

Cyril was born in Edessa and received religious instruction at the Za'faran Monastery, where he also assumed the monastic habit. He was ordained as a deacon in 1701 and later as a priest. When Patriarch Shukr Allah became sure of his good conduct, he ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of Ma'dan and called him Cyril Faraj Allah at his ordination. In 1732, Cyril succeeded Metropolitan Cyril Yesu'. His insignia reads as follows: "Metropolitan Cyril Faraj Allah, 1732." He was transferred in 1740 to the diocese of Bedlis, where he resided until 1751. The patriarch then transferred him again, to the diocese of Gargar, and changed his name to Gregorius. In September, 1756, Cyril died at Edessa after serving the priesthood for twenty-four years and was buried in its church. Of his relatives was the priest 'Isa of the church of Edessa, who was still living in 1759.

#### **11- CYRIL JIRJIS, METROPOLITAN OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR JULIAN AND HOMS AND LATER OF JERUSALEM (1737–1773)**

Of the late metropolitans of Jerusalem, Cyril was certainly the most prominent church father for his godliness, zeal, and learning. More than other fathers, he

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<sup>48</sup> We have already mentioned in the biography of Metropolitan Basilus Gurgis, predecessor of Boghos, that Basilus administered his diocese for thirty-one years and died in 1748 (Vol. 5, 144 of this magazine). More correctly, is that he headed the diocese for thirty years, and most likely, resigned because of old age in 1737. He died in 1748 as related by some of his contemporaries.

was distinguished for his deeds, far-reaching aims, and achievements. His father was Maqdisi Elian Fattal, and his grandfather was Maqdisi Yuhanna, nicknamed Ibn al-Musaddi. The Fattal family had been well known in Aleppo since the seventeenth century. Among the relatives of Cyril Jirjis were his cousin the priest Jirjis Fattal (1756); his cousin (on his mother's side) the priest Jirjis, son of 'Ata Allah al-'Aqil of Aleppo, who was a monk of the Za'faran Monastery in 1720 (according to the book *The Cause of all Causes*, in the possession of the metropolitan of Tur Abdin); and his nephew, the monk Elias, son of Faraj Allah of Aleppo, abbot of the Monastery of St. Mark (1754–1763).<sup>49</sup>

Jirjis was born in Aleppo in the first decade of the eighteenth century. At an early age he showed marks of intelligence and good character and acquired some learning. Determined to abstain from the pleasures of this world, he traveled to the Za'faran Monastery, where he adopted the monastic life and assumed the monastic habit. He devoted himself to the study of church sciences and was ordained a priest. He studied under Patriarch Shukr Allah before 1728. As his virtue and knowledge became well known, the patriarch ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of the Monastery of Mar Julian, (which included Homs, Hama, Sadad, and al-Qaryatain), and called him Cyril Jirjis at his ordination. The ceremony of his ordination was attended by five bishops—Gregorius Tuma, metropolitan of Jerusalem; Dionysius Gurgis, metropolitan of Aleppo; Cyril Faraj Allah, metropolitan of Ma'dan; Dioscorus Sarukhan, bishop of al-Nabk and the Monastery of Mar Musa; and Gregorius Tuma, bishop of Damascus. His *systatikon* was signed on December 14, 1727. (This *systatikon* is still preserved at the Library of the Za'faran Monastery MS 175.)

In 1728, the superior of the Monastery of St. Mark, the monk Yuhanna of Aleppo, passed away. The patriarch deputized Cyril Jirjis to take charge of the monastery in addition to his diocese. The management of the diocese of Jerusalem at that time required special care, namely that a metropolitan should administer it, along with the Monastery of St. Mark, which belonged to it. The metropolitan usually visited the diocese periodically to collect alms and revenues from the religious endowments of the holy church of Zion. He also had the right to reside at the monastery. To alleviate the burden of administration, a second metropolitan for the diocese was required, one who would reside at Jerusalem and act as a deputy of the principal metropolitan. This state of affairs continued, despite the difficulties and the multitude of

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<sup>49</sup> See the Book of Psalms in Arabic at the Library of Jerusalem, MS 266.

economic needs of that time, for roughly 250 years, from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the middle of the present (twentieth) century. On February 25, 1728, Cyril went to Jerusalem to take charge of the monastery, and immediately set to renovate its church and vessels. He proceeded to deliver homilies to the congregation. Moreover, he exerted great effort to regulate the revenues of the monastery and its religious endowments.

Cyril had an iron gate made for the monastery and paid its cost from his own money. The reason he did this was because of the following incident. In July 1729, a Muslim named Khayr al-Din, son of Sheikh Hasan al-Ja'uni, came to the monastery at night asking for water. He knocked at the old wooden door, which was already falling apart, but no one responded. He started hitting the door with stones until he smashed it. Fearing that he might be reported to the judge, Khayr al-Din and the relatives who were in his company rushed to the judge on the next day, claiming that when no one opened the door for him, Khayr al-Din insulted the metropolitan, who in turn insulted him, and thus he smashed the door. Appearing before the judge and relating the event as it had happened, the metropolitan found that he was surrounded by false witnesses. The sagacious judge, however, understood the truth about the case and realized that Khayr al-Din claim was false. He rejected the case against the metropolitan, based on legal evidence. Meanwhile, Khayr al-Din and his relatives beseeched the metropolitan for pardon.<sup>50</sup>

In 1740, Cyril purchased, with his own money, and bequeathed as an endowment to the monastery, half of the house located near the Monastery of St. Mark in the district of Sihyoun (Zion), which belonged to the heirs of the deacon Sim'am, son of Ibrahim.<sup>51</sup> In the following year, he enlarged the reception hall and furnished it with three closets. He also decorated the covers of three Gospels with silver, one of which belonged to the Church of the Resurrection. It was a bequest of the late Metropolitan Athanasius Aslan of Amid. In 1745, he attended the synod at Amid which elected Patriarch Jirjis III of Edessa. In 1747, he succeeded in exempting the monastery from an unjust tax which Ahmad Hindiyya, son of Hajj Muhammad Agha, exacted from the monastery as annual tribute for the occasion of the Muslims' feast. Evidently, Hindiyya inherited this tribute from his father, who it was said, had acquired it from two men—Abu al-Fadl and 'Abd al-Nabi, son of sheikh Mustafa al-'Alami—in 1729, after paying them thirty pieces of Egyptian coin. Metropolitan Cyril Jirjis compensated Ahmad Hindiyya by paying him thirty-four zalatas (certain coins) and removed his name from the register of the

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<sup>50</sup> See the judge's verdict at the Library of the Monastery of St. Mark, MS 371.

<sup>51</sup> See the legal document at the library of the Monastery of St. Mark, MS 371.



feast's tribute.<sup>52</sup> Having managed the monastery for nine years and a few months, Cyril resigned his position. During this period, however, he ordained eight deacons and three priests for the church of Jerusalem, and five deacons and an archdeacon for the church of Aleppo. He designated the monk 'Abd al-Ahad to replace him and handed him the properties of the monastery and its belongings, all of which have been recorded in a register.

After resigning his position, Metropolitan Cyril Jirjis resided for a time at the Za'faran Monastery and then at Amid. Meanwhile, the Metropolitan See of Jerusalem became vacant with the death of Gregorius Tuma in 1748, and Patriarch Jirjis III transferred Cyril to that see. Immediately, he journeyed to Jerusalem and then to Egypt proper and to Upper Egypt, to visit the monastics and their monasteries and to collect alms from the orthodox believers for the renovation of the Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem. The orthodox believers received him with eagerness and honor. It happened that some schismatics, who held the doctrine that the two natures of Christ were still separated after their union in the Incarnation, challenged him.<sup>53</sup> When Cyril Jirjis saw that he had to answer them, he called for meetings to debate the question with the Jesuit monk Anton in the presence of his superior monk, Paul. The meetings were held in Egypt (probably Cairo), Upper Egypt, the town of Sadafa, the native town of Sheikh 'Izz al-Din, and at Akhmim, Jurja, and Farshout.<sup>54</sup>

The debate at Jurja was held at the house of the Orthodox Copt Mu'allim Jirjis, who invited Cyril to dinner. Cyril debated his opponent (the Jesuit Anton) constantly from morning until evening and explained the veracity of the doctrine of the One Incarnate Nature of Christ, based on the teaching of St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444). Padre Anton was defeated, to the great joy of the Copts and the Syrians of Jurja. Cyril Jirjis then returned to the residence of Anba Cyril, bishop of Jurja. On the next day Mu'allim Nakhla, an adherent of the Latin (Roman Catholic) faith, invited him to a debate. He was attended by Coptic priests and about fifty laymen. The debaters examined copies of the letters of St. Cyril, and the debate ended with the failure of the padre.

When this magnanimous father of the church returned to Jerusalem, he rebuilt the Monastery of St. Mark, spending on the project a thousand *zur*

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<sup>52</sup> MS 204 at the Library of the Monastery of St. Mark.

<sup>53</sup> *tr. note:* That is, they challenged his belief, held by the Syrian and the Coptic Churches, that, in the Incarnation, the two natures of Christ became one and could no longer be separated.

<sup>54</sup> Jurja is still a bishopric see. We have copied the above information from the account of Cyril himself, as shall be seen later.

*mabbub*,<sup>55</sup> an amount estimated at four or five hundred golden liras. Then he visited the Syrian lands to collect the tithes of his see and the donations of believers. He was very zealous in protecting the interests of the Holy City (Jerusalem). Meanwhile, he enlightened the Syrian people with his homilies and sound teaching. He ordained fifteen priests and sixty deacons for the churches of Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Sadad, al-Qaryatayn, and Ba Khudayda (Qaraqosh) in a period of four years (1757–1761). Among these clergy were eight priests and thirty deacons whom he ordained for the churches of Qaraqosh in one day.<sup>56</sup> He stayed in Aleppo for two years (1755–1757), administering its diocese, which was then without a metropolitan (according to a Service Book in Aleppo, as related by the deacon ‘Abd Allah al-Shidyayq). From Aleppo he journeyed to Mosul in 1761, and upon his return to his diocese, he ordained fourteen deacons for the church of Edessa in 1764. In 1768, Cyril attended the synod convened at Amid to elect Patriarch Jirjis IV, of Mosul. He was the ordainer of the new patriarch at the Za’faran Monastery. He persevered in administering his diocese with apostolic zeal until he was called home by his Lord on May 27, 1773. He was buried in the mausoleum of the fathers at the Za’faran Monastery, as was reported by the deacon ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ‘Azar of Aleppo, his contemporary and a native of his city.<sup>57</sup> He was seventy years old. He served the priesthood for thirty-six years and six months. He was of commanding stature, venerable, and endowed with a melodious voice. He gained a good name and a noble remembrance among the good fathers of the church. May God be gracious to him and make the heavenly bliss his final abode.

Cyril wrote a book of average quality entitled *Al-I’tiqad al-Sahih fi Tajassud al-Masih* (“The True Belief in the Incarnation of Christ”). It opened with his debates with Padre Anton, from which we cited the above account. In this book he included *The Nicene Creed*, *An Account of the Council of Chalcedon*, and *Mar Dioscorus*. Then he recorded his debates with Padre Anton and the testimonies of the earlier fathers of the church, and refuted the Council of Chalcedon and

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<sup>55</sup> See the History of St. Mark. *Zur mabbub* is an ancient form of money put in circulation at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

<sup>56</sup> See The Order of Ordinations at the Library of the Monastery of Za’faran, MS 221.

<sup>57</sup> This information is taken from the book entitled *Diryaq al-Uqul* (“The Antidote of Minds”) by the priest Abu al-Khayr Ibn Abi al-Tayyib, a twelfth-century Coptic learned man, copied in the handwriting of the deacon ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Azar and dated 1746. ‘Azar recorded in it the dates of the deaths of twenty chief priests in his own time. It is now in the possession of the ‘Azar family in Aleppo.

the universal authority of the pope. The book consisted of 300 pages. He began writing it in Egypt and completed it at Aleppo. Soon copies of it were spread throughout the countries. It stands as a testimony of his profound knowledge of the Scriptures and church history. A copy of this book is at our library, and three more copies are at the library of the Monastery of St. Mark (MSS 147 and 148). Together with Patriarch Jirjis III, Cyril shared the expenses of the transcription of *The Commentary on the Gospel* by Bar Salibi (d. 1172), which was translated into Arabic by the monk ‘Abd al-Nur of Amid, whom he assisted in standardizing its language in 1755.

Viscount Philip Tarrazi, in his *Al-Salasil al-Tarikhyya*, claims that in 1769 Cyril Jirjis converted to Catholicism and resided at the Monastery of Raghm in Lebanon, where he died in 1778. Tarrazi goes on to say that Cyril abdicated his See of Jerusalem to someone called Shukr Allah Jarwa.<sup>58</sup> What Tarrazi says, however, is groundless and derived from inaccurate sources. The truth is what we have said about Cyril Jirjis in his biography. For more evidence (that he did not convert to Catholicism), we contend that:

1) We have in the patriarchal Library a *systaticon* of Cyril Musa, bishop of the Monastery of Musa in al-Nabk, who was ordained in 1771, dated January 15, 1771, bearing the seal of our Cyril Jirjis, beginning in both Syriac and Arabic as follows: “By God’s mercy, Jurjis, metropolitan of the noble city of Jerusalem,” followed by the comment, “When we confirmed this *systaticon* in 1771, which is in the hand of our brother Bishop Musa of the Monastery of Mar Musa.”

2) At the Library of the Za’faran Monastery there is a copy of the *Didache*<sup>59</sup> in the Arabic MS 199, which mentions that in 1770, Maqdisi Ibrahim, son of Khawaja Shahin, donated it to the church of Amid in the time of Patriarch Ignatius Jirjis III (more correctly Jirjis IV), in the presence of Jurjis of Aleppo, metropolitan of Jerusalem, and of the Metropolitans Tuma of Qutrubul and Bishara of Bedlis.

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<sup>58</sup> *tr. note:* See Viscount Philip de Tarrazi, *Al-Salasil al-Taikhyya fi Asaqifat al-Abrashyyat al-Suryaniyya* (“Historical Tables of the Bishops of Syrian Doceses: Beirut, al-Matba’a al-Adabiyya,” 1910), 85-87. Since Tarrazi is a member of the Syrian Catholic sect that seceded from the mother Syrian Orthodox Church in the seventeenth century, he is, most unfortunately, prejudicial and often incorrect in the information presented in his book about the history and the fathers of the Syrian Orthodox Church. Later, he tried to be more objective, probably intending to redress his former prejudices, in his book *Asqaq Ma Kan An Tarikh Lubnan Wa Safha Min Akhbhar al-Suryan*, 3 vols. (Beirut, 1948).

<sup>59</sup> *tr. note:* The teaching ascribed to the Twelve Apostles.

3) At the village of Anhil in Tur ‘Abdin there is a copy of *The Ethicon*,<sup>60</sup> in Syriac, with the following comment: “Donated by Metropolitan Jirjis of Jerusalem to his pupil the monk Iliyya (Elijah), whom he asked to celebrate thirty Masses for him. The witnesses were Rabban Ishaq of Qal’at al-Imra’a, monk of the Za’faran Monastery, Rabban ‘Abd al-Ahad of Mardin, and Rabban Tu’mah of Sadad of the monks of Mar Musa in the province of Damascus, in the middle of April, 2081 of the Greeks/1770 AD.”

4) We read in a *Service Book of Hymns for Principal Feasts* at the church of Ma’sarte, a village of Mardin, in the handwriting of Mikha’il, son of Yusuf of Nabk, that he finished its transcription in the time of Patriarch Gurgis of Antioch and Gregorius Jirjis, metropolitan of Jerusalem, in 1771.

5) Naqqasha<sup>61</sup> mentions on p. 199 a letter dated November 7, 1770, by Patriarch Jirjis IV of Mosul, delivered from Mardin to the Vartabet Wanis in the Mountain of Kisrawan, in which he mentions Metropolitan Jirjis.

6) At the Church of Mar Musa in Damascus there is a *Synaxarium* (“Lives of Holy Saints”) in the handwriting of Yuhanna, metropolitan of Damascus, dated June 9, 1771, in the time of Patriarch Jirjis and Gregorius Jirjis, metropolitan of Jerusalem.

7) At the church of Qal’at al-Imra’a there is a book of liturgies in the handwriting of the deacon Yusuf, son of Dawud of Qusur, dated 2083 of the Greeks/1772 AD—that is, in the time of Patriarch Jirjis and Gregorius, metropolitan of Jerusalem.

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<sup>60</sup> *tr. note:* The *Nomocanon* of Bar Hebraeus.

<sup>61</sup> *tr. note:* The reference here is to the Syrian Catholic Metropolitan Dionysius Aphram Naqqasha’s book *Kitab Inayat al-Rahman fi Hidayat al-Suryan*, III (Beirut: Matba’at Sabra, 1910), 198–199, where he produced two letters of Patriarch Jirjis III (more correctly Jirjis IV), sent to the Armenian Vartabet Wanis in the Mountain of Kisrawan. We are concerned here only with the first letter, dated November 7, 1770, in which the patriarch tells Wanis, “Our brethren and children Jirjis, metropolitan of Holy Jerusalem and ... (he names other bishops) send you their greetings.” Naqqasha’s purpose in recording these letters was to show that the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch, Jirjis IV, was inclined toward Catholicism and the Catholic Church, and intended to join them. But he did not do so openly because of fear of his bishops. These two letters say nothing about whether Patriarch Jirjis was inclined toward Roman Catholicism. Naqqasha, whose church seceded from the mother Syrian Orthodox Church, missed no opportunity to denigrate this church and its fathers in order to establish legitimacy for his schismatic church. Indeed, his book is a combination of half-truths and falsehoods. It should be read with extreme caution, especially by those who have no sound knowledge of the reasons which led Naqqasha’s church to secede from the mother church.

8) At the Church of the Martyr Shmuni, there is a copy of *The Service Book for the Week of the White* (Whitsunday) whose transcription was completed by the priest Yaqub of Qutrubul on March 25, 2084 of the Greeks/1773 AD, in the days of Patriarch Gurgis (Jirjis) and Metropolitan Jirjis.

Considering this evidence, how could Tarrazi state that our Metropolitan Cyril resided at the Monastery of Raghm in 1769 and allege that he abdicated his see and became a superior of that monastery? How could Naqqasha further make him resign his position at the monastery and hand it over to the Chorepiscopus Elias Amir Khan in 1778? Again, how could he make him die on July 24, 1777? The evidence we produced is sufficient to refute such allegations, not to mention the fact that Bishop Cyril Mansur of Jerusalem was appointed to the Monastery of St. Mark immediately after the death of Metropolitan Jirjis in 1773.

## 12- CYRIL GURGIS (JIRJIS), METROPOLITAN OF HATTACK (1737–1760)

Cyril Gurgis (Jirjis) was an outstanding father of the Church known for his piety, magnanimity, and apostolic zeal. Why should he not be so? Indeed, he came from a household known for its godliness, morals, and excellent accomplishments. Other famous members of his family, known as the family of the priest ‘Abd al-Jalil, were the Patriarch Jirjis II (d. 1708) and the priest Rizq Allah (1693–1703), sons of his father’s uncle; and his aunt’s son, Cyril Rizq Allah, bishop of Mosul (1749–1772), the son of the Chorepiscopus Matta.

Cyril Gurgis was born at Mosul in 1709. His father was the deacon Musa, and his mother was Sarah. Before his death, Patriarch Jirjis told Cyril’s father, “God will grant you a son whom I want you to name after me (i.e., Jirjis). I ask God to install him as a patriarch who will sit on my patriarchal throne,” and he then presented him with a Book of Psalms.

The patriarch’s prophecy was realized. Cyril was born and given the same name as the patriarch. He received a proper upbringing and grew up to be a well-mannered and pious young man. In 1729, when he was twenty years of age, he entered the Za’faran Monastery and studied church sciences and received training in monastic living. He assumed the monastic habit and was ordained a deacon and then a priest. Because of his godliness, Patriarch Shukr Allah chose him as metropolitan for the Hattack diocese,<sup>62</sup> that is, the Monastery of the Sayyida (Virgin Mary), known as the Mu’allaq Monastery, and

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<sup>62</sup> Hattack is a fortress in Diyarbakr near Miyafarqin, popularly called Antack. It was a diocesan seat until the middle of the nineteenth century.

the villages which belonged to it. They were Shimshim, Halhal, Qoum, Malaha, Hazro, Mahraniyya, and Babetne, situated in the Mountain of Takh or Hattack. In the middle of December, 1737, he was ordained a metropolitan and assumed the name of Cyril Gurgis (Jirjis) at his ordination. Assisting the patriarch in his ordination was Dionysius Jirjis, metropolitan of Aleppo, who, together with the patriarch, signed his *systaticon* on December 15. The *systaticon* was copied in the handwriting of the Chorepiscopus ‘Abd Yeshu’, son of Ni’ma of Qusur.<sup>63</sup>

The patriarch detected promising signs of potential in the new metropolitan. As soon as he became a metropolitan, Cyril Gurgis devoted his energy to the administration of his diocese. For five years he preached and ordained a number of monks and priests. In December, 1742, the patriarch dispatched him on a mission to Mosul. Cyril journeyed to that city, where he remained until 1744, and undertook the renovation of the Church of Mar Tuma the Apostle, having witnessed the attack of the Persian King Nadir Shah Tahmasb against Mosul the year before (1743). He composed a *zjaliyya* (ode) about that event.

After Patriarch Jirjis III ascended the Patriarchal Throne, he transferred Cyril in 1747 to the Za’faran Monastery and the diocese of Mardin. Cyril devoted his energy to educating and ordaining a number of monks. He left a good impression on the monastery’s inmates. In 1752 he and his brother, the deacon Isaiah (d. 1772), donated fifteen silver lamps to the monastery for the repose of the soul of their mother, Sarah. We found in the book *The Office of Ordinations* that from 1747 to 1760, Cyril ordained six monks, nineteen priests, and sixty-seven deacons for the churches attached to the Za’faran Monastery, Mardin, Diyarbakr, Nisibin, Qal’at al-Imra’a, Qusur, Mansuriyya, Banabil and Qellith.<sup>64</sup>

When the See of the East became vacant with the death of Maphryono Basilius Li’azar IV in the fall of 1759, Patriarch Jirjis III ordained Metropolitan Cyril a Maphryono in 1760. Later he ascended the patriarchal throne (as Ignatius Jirjis IV), as shall be seen later (ch. 5).

### 13- SEVERUS ‘ABD AL-AHAD, METROPOLITAN OF EDESSA (1738–1757)

‘Abd al-Ahad was the son of Maqdisi Yuhanna of the Akhras family of Mardin, which produced men who served the priesthood. He was born and grew up in

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<sup>63</sup> MS at the Za’faran Monastery.

<sup>64</sup> Za’faran MS 220.

Mardin. In his youth he loved the monastic life and thus entered the Za'faran Monastery, where he studied church sciences and was ordained a priest. When the See of Edessa became vacant at the death of his brother, Metropolitan Severus Elias, Patriarch Shukr Allah ordained him a metropolitan for Edessa in 1738, calling him Severus 'Abd al-Ahad at his ordination. His insignia was inscribed with the words, "Severus 'Abd al-Ahad, metropolitan of Edessa, who asks for the favor of the One and only One (1738)." He is mentioned in some manuscripts at the Library of Edessa, as the one who received the four offertory plates which were collected in the course of seventeen festivals over the year. He did this in accordance with the custom of the preceding metropolitans of Edessa.

According to the deacon 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Azar of Aleppo, this church father was proficient in medical science and was of short stature. He visited Aleppo twice, in 1743 and 1745. He then journeyed to Amid to attend the synod that elected and installed Patriarch Gurgis (Jirjis) III.

After administering his diocese for nineteen years, Severus went to meet his Lord on September 26, 1757, and was buried in the Church of the Two Apostles in Edessa. His name, inscribed in Garshuni, still appears on his grave.

#### **14- IYAWANNIS YUHANNA, ECUMENICAL METROPOLITAN OF THE PATRIARCHAL OFFICE (1740–1755)**

Iyawannis Yuhanna was son of the deacon Shahim, son of Shammo. He was born and raised in Amid. He was nicknamed the Araqchinchi.<sup>65</sup> Yuhanna is also known as the Mawsili (he of Mosul) because his family originally came from that city. His mother was Qamar (Moon).

Yuhanna was born in Diyarbakr (Amid). He said of his family, "We were four brothers. I and my brother 'Abd al-Karim became monks, while the other two, 'Abd al-Masih and Jeremiah, remained laymen." Yuhanna had two sisters, Maryam and Gawzal (Beautiful). He entered the Za'faran Monastery shortly before 1716; there he studied religious sciences and mastered the Syriac language. He was later ordained a priest. At this monastery, he transcribed *The Service Book of Baptism* for the Church of the Forty Martyrs in 1725. Today this book is at the Church of St. Shmuni.

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<sup>65</sup> Turkish term for the one who makes white linen caps worn on the head underneath the turban to absorb sweat from the head. The author of *Aqrab al-Mawarid* says, "The Araqjin is a head cap, and I have found no mention of it in trustworthy dictionaries."

In 1727, Yuhanna was transferred to the Monastery of Mar Matta in the Mountain of al-Faf near Mosul. But before 1732, he returned to his monastery (Za'faran) and devoted his time to copying Syriac manuscripts in his elegant handwriting. We have come upon some of these manuscripts, one of which was a Syriac and Garshuni Gospel at the Church of The Lady of Hah, completed in 1732. Other manuscripts included a copy of the Gospel for church use which he transcribed at the Za'faran Monastery in 1735 and which was donated by Patriarch Shukr Allah to the church of Banabil; a Gospel for the Monastery of St. Mark in Bushairiyya which he completed in 1737; a commentary on the Old Testament in Garshuni which he completed in 1727 at the village of Bartulli; a book of Unction which he completed in 1739, now at the Church of St. Shmuni; and a Gospel which he transcribed in 1737 at the Monastery of Yuhanna the Ta'i in Tur 'Abdin.

Iyawannis Yuhanna resided at the Qatra Monastery from 1737 to 1739. In 1743, Patriarch Shukr Allah ordained him a metropolitan for the Patriarchal Office and called him Iyawannis at his ordination. I saw his insignia at the village of Basibrina in a Syriac grammar book which he completed in his elegant handwriting in 1740. It read thus: "Iyawannis Yuhanna, Ecumenical Metropolitan, 1740."

In 1743, Yuhanna was appointed a superior of the Monastery of Mar Matta. About 1746, Patriarch Jirjis III entrusted to him the administration of the diocese of Malabar, India.<sup>66</sup> The Syrian people of Malabar had sought the assistance of a Jewish merchant named Ezekiel, who transacted business with the Middle East, to facilitate Iyawannis Yuhanna's journey. Ezekiel joined Yuhanna at Basra, Iraq. He boarded the ship of the Syrian Antonius, who was doing business with India. When Iyawannis arrived in Malabar, he proceeded to visit the churches, preaching, evangelizing, and guiding the people. He was extremely zealous (for the faith), but hot-tempered. Whenever he found a figurine of a saint, he shattered it and rebuked those who adored it. The figurines had been placed by the Latin (Roman Catholic) clerics in the churches when they controlled Malabar.<sup>67</sup> For this reason, some labeled him "the iconoclast." He ordered the priests to wear black caps and suspended from

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<sup>66</sup> Some contemporary Malabarian writers say that Iyawannis Yuhanna was sent to Malabar in 1739, while others say he was sent in 1748 by order of the Maphryono of the East, Li'azar IV. What we have said above is more accurate. It is corroborated by Yuhanna's contemporary Gregorius Yuhanna Shuqayr, metropolitan of Damascus, who said that Iyawannis Yuhanna arrived in Malabar on January 16, 1747.

<sup>67</sup> *tr. note:* Most likely, the reference here is to the Portuguese, who arrived in Malabar in the sixteenth century.



performing priestly duties those who had violated the rituals, church laws, and Syriac traditions. He did this with daring fearlessness. Evidently, Tuma of Malabar, who had unlawfully positioned himself as bishop with the assistance of the notables of Malabar, was displeased because Iyawannis Yuhanna did not take counsel with him or the notables about his actions. The notables pleaded with Iyawannis Yuhanna and convinced him to write two letters, one to the patriarch and the other to Shukr Allah Qasabchi, metropolitan of Aleppo, requesting that an outstanding maphryono be sent to Malabar. Tuma also wrote similar letters, and he and the notables sent them with the deacon Antonius, mentioned above.<sup>68</sup>

When Maphryono Shukr Allah and Metropolitan Yuhanna of Khydaida (who were newly delegated by the patriarch) arrived in Malabar on April 23, 1751, Iyawannis went to see them. After some deliberation, they concluded that his treatment of the Syrian natives was harsh. The maphryono detained him at the citadel of Cochin to await a ship bound for the East. When a ship became available, he sent Yuhanna back to the East at the end of 1751, in accordance with the patriarch's order. The maphryono also sent back with him the Chorepiscopus Jirjis, son of Chorepiscopus Ni'mat Allah Tunburji of Aleppo. We found at the Library of Cambridge a liturgy transcribed in Malabar by Iyawannis dated 2090 of the Greeks/1749 AD.<sup>69</sup>

In the last quarter of 1752, the patriarch appointed Iyawannis a metropolitan for the diocese of Bedlis, which he administered for three years. He died at Bedlis in September 1755, having served the episcopate for fifteen years. His brother Metropolitan 'Abd al-Karim also died at Bedlis. May God have mercy on them!

## 15- BASILIUS DENHA, MAPHRYONO OF TUR 'ABDIN (1740–1779)

Denha was the son of Yuhanna Baltachi (Beth Balto), whose family was also called Beth Habil (Abel), and his mother was Nisa. He recorded his genealogy in a Syriac *Book of Husoyos for the Resurrection*, which he completed in 1749. We found this book at the Monastery of Mar Sharbil in the neighborhood of Midyat. He said that his brothers were Saliba, Mirza, and Barsoum. Others who

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<sup>68</sup> *tr. note:* According to Malabarian writers, in addition to his hot temper, Iyawannis Yuhanna displeased Tuma V because he did not produce an authorization from the Patriarch of Antioch to ordain him a lawful metropolitan. See E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas* (1908, reprinted 2002), 155; Curien, *The Syrian Orthodox Church in India and its Apostolic Faith* (1989), 106–107; and Mar Severus Jacob Tuma (later Patriarch Jacob III), *History of the Syrian Church of India* (Beirut 1951), 122–124.

<sup>69</sup> Cambridge MS 1036.

flourished in this family were Yusuf, archbishop of Tur 'Abdin (d. 1724), Athanasius, metropolitan of the diocese of the Monastery of the Cross (1845–1873), and several presbyters, among whom were Shim'un and his son the priest Adam, who was still living in 1912. It was the presbyter Shim'un who related to us some of his brothers' chronicles.

Basilus Denha was born in the village of 'Arnas in Tur 'Abdin, and was thus called the 'Arnasian. He was also called the Kafarzan because his family came originally from the village of Kafarze in Tur 'Abdin. He grew up to cherish the monastic life and studied under Mar Shim'un, the famous Maphryono of Tur 'Abdin, from whom he learned godly and virtuous traits. Maphryono Shim'un ordained him a deacon before 1722, robed him with the monastic habit, and then ordained him a priest before 1728. He lived at the Monastery of Mar Abhai in the village of Manim'im, where he copied a service book which we came upon at the Church of Mar Iliyya (Elijah) in the village of Baqisyan. In that year, he moved to the Monastery of Mar Shim'un, in the neighborhood of the village of Arbo, where he transcribed a commentary on the Psalms by Mar Daniel of Salah, which he completed on September 23, 1728. With him at this monastery resided Rabban 'Abd al-Razzaq of Mosul (the metropolitan who was martyred in 1740), and the monks Ibrahim, son of Yeshu' of Qutrulul, Bulus of Ma'dan, and Gurgis of Mardin (MSS of Basibrina). Basilus Denha also transcribed the *busoyos* of the Resurrection and other festivals at the Monastery of the Cross, known as Beth El. He donated it to the Monastery of Mar Abhai, mentioned earlier. His handwriting was of average quality.

When Maphryono Shim'un, of blessed memory, was martyred, Basilus Denha witnessed his martyrdom. Patriarch Shukr Allah ordained Denha a Maphryono for the towns of Hisn Kipha, Tur 'Abdin, and for the Monastery of Qartmin (the Monastery of Mar Gabriel) on Sunday, July 27, 1740, and called him Basilus Denha at his ordination. The ordination was attended by Gregorius Tuma, metropolitan of Jerusalem, and Cyril Faraj Allah, metropolitan of Bedlis. The patriarch handed him his *gystatikon*, which we came upon at the Monastery of the Cross in 1912. It was kept by the priest Adam Baltachi, and contained the commendations and seals of the fathers.

In 1748, Basilus Denha renovated the episcopal residence of the Church of the Virgin and Mar Barsoum in the village of 'Araban, located between the villages of Basibrina and Tamars. At that time, about fourteen Syrian families lived in 'Araban. We passed through this village in 1911 and found in it only two Syrian families and about forty Muslim families. Its church was in ruins.

In 1749, Basilus Denha lived in the cloister of Mar Barsoum, in the neighborhood of the village of Dafne, near Hisn Kipha. There he transcribed the book of the *busoyos* for the Resurrection, mentioned earlier. He later resided

at the Monastery of the Cross, also known as the Monastery of Makhar, but was forced to leave due to a misunderstanding which occurred between him and the lord of Hisn Kipha. He left for the Monastery of St. Barbara in the village of Beirar and then moved to the Monastery of the Cross (Beth El).

Several clerics studied under Basilus Denha, including the deacons Gabriel and 'Aziz, and the monk Yaqub, son of Sulayman of Basibrina, whom Denha ordained a bishop at the end of 1749, calling him Cyril. In 1752, this bishop ordained the priests Yeshu' and Gurgis. In 1759 Basibrina was afflicted with famine, which swept away the priest Yaqub and eight more priests, twenty deacons, and about a thousand lay people.<sup>70</sup> From Maphryono Denha's family came his nephew Julius Israel, metropolitan of the Monastery of Bethel (1779–1785). After serving the episcopate for thirty-nine years, Maphryono Denha died and was buried at the Monastery of Qartmin before September 1779, being eighty years old. He was a righteous man. May God have mercy on him!

## **16- DIOSCORUS SHUKR ALLAH, METROPOLITAN OF THE JAZIRA (1743–1785)**

We know nothing about his origin or upbringing prior to his becoming a bishop. Some, however, maintain that he was born in Basibrina. After spending a long time as a monk, Patriarch Shukr Allah ordained him a metropolitan for Jazirat ibn 'Umar and called him Dioscorus in 1743 (or 1745, as some say). He was a venerable church father who administered his diocese properly for more than forty years. I have not found the date of his death, which most likely occurred in 1785. He was buried at the Church of Mar Behnam in the city of the Jazira, next to Metropolitan Dioscorus Gabriel of Bartulli (d. 1300). In his tomb was also buried Bishop Athanasius Stephan of the Jazira in 1869. Dioscorus Shukr Allah attended the synod which elected Patriarch Jirjis IV. He was succeeded by the Metropolitan Iyawannis Sa'id of Mardin.

## **17- BULUS, METROPOLITAN OF MA'DAN (1745–1769)**

Bulus was the son of 'Abd al-Ahad of Ma'dan. He was born in the village of Ma'dan in the province of Sherwan. He became inclined toward the monastic life, assumed the monastic habit, was ordained a deacon, and then a priest. In 1738, he resided at the Monastery of Mar Malke in Tur 'Abdin, and then moved in 1740 to the Monastery of Mar Shim'un near the village of Arbo, as related by his companion the monk Ibrahim of Qutrubul. In response to the request of Patriarch Shukr Allah, he transcribed a copy of *The Chariot of Divine*

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<sup>70</sup> According to MSS of Basibrina, the Book of Life, and other sources.

*Mysteries*, which he completed at the Monastery of Mar Malke. This copy is now at the Monastery of Mar Matta. In 1745, Patriarch Shukr Allah ordained him a metropolitan for Ma'dan, but we could not find his ordination name. He administered his diocese for some years, assisted toward the end of his days by Metropolitan Gregorius Behnam. He died in 1769.

### **18- CYRIL YUHANNA, ECUMENICAL METROPOLITAN (1745–1771)**

Cyril Yuhanna, known as the son of Koul, was born in Mardin and became a novice monk at the Za'faran Monastery, where he was ordained a priest before the year 1716. In 1745, Patriarch Shukr Allah ordained him a metropolitan and called him Cyril Yuhanna at his ordination. The next year he committed a sin and fell (from grace) and was condemned and suspended from service.<sup>71</sup> In January 1748, he composed a *zajaliyya* (ode) in which he repented and appealed to Patriarch Jirjis III for forgiveness. The patriarch accepted his penitence and absolved him. Cyril resided at the Za'faran Monastery until 1763. Then he was appointed a superior of the Monastery of Mar Yaquub (Jacob), overlooking the Za'faran Monastery. He was still living at this monastery in 1766 and 1768. Patriarch Jirjis IV mentioned him in one of his letters dated October 1770. He died shortly after 1771. He composed a simplistic ode on the repentance of his sin and another ode in praise of the Virgin Mary (according to the *Collection of Odes* in Mardin).

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<sup>71</sup> *tr. note:* The author does not specify the sin committed by this metropolitan. It was most likely an act of adultery.

## 4 PATRIARCH IGNATIUS JIRJIS III (1745–1768)

Ignatius Jirjis ascended the Patriarchal Throne at the Church of Amid on a Sunday in October 1745 and passed away on July 7, 1768 having served twenty-two years, eight months and twenty-five days. He was about eighty years old.

Jirjis (Gurgis) was the son of Shim'un, and a grandson of the brother of the patriarch of Antioch, 'Abd al-Masih I (1662–1668). He was born in Edessa in the ninth decade of the seventeenth century. As a youth he became inclined toward the monastic life and entered the Za'faran Monastery, studying church sciences and acquiring training in the way of the monastics. He was ordained a priest and joined the monks of the cell of Patriarch Ishaq, where he excelled in church service and administration. Because he was efficient and venerable, Patriarch Jirjis II in 1722 ordained him a metropolitan for his patriarchal office (cell) and called him Basilius Gurgis at his ordination. In the middle of this year the Metropolitan attended the synod at the Za'faran Monastery which elected and installed Patriarch Shukr Allah. He remained at the monastery until 1727. The patriarch appointed him to the metropolitan see of Aleppo and changed his name to Dionysius, following the tradition of the metropolitans of the diocese who had assumed the same name.<sup>72</sup> For eighteen years he administered the diocese of Aleppo, which had a number of priests, deacons, and orthodox (Syrian) parishioners. Jirjis ordained priests and deacons. By 1739 there were twelve priests in the church of Aleppo. In 1737, he visited the patriarch at Amid and assisted him in the ordination of Metropolitan Jirjis of Aleppo and Metropolitan Jirjis of Mosul.

When the Patriarchal See became vacant with the death of Patriarch Shukr Allah, Gregorius Tuma of Mosul, metropolitan of Jerusalem, was then in Amid. Meanwhile, on September 18, Cyril Gurgis Sani'a, nephew of Patriarch Shukr Allah, metropolitan of Mardin, arrived in Amid. These church dignitaries met with the chorepiscopi and priests of Amid, twenty in number, and the Syrian notables and elders. They wrote a letter to Dionysius Jirjis, metropolitan of

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<sup>72</sup> See *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya* 6 (1939), 86.

Aleppo, signed with their seals, requesting him to proceed to Amid. Meanwhile, Metropolitan Severus ‘Abd al-Ahad of Edessa and Cyril Jirjis, metropolitan of Homs and the Monastery of Mar Julian and the patriarch’s deputy in Jerusalem, were then in Aleppo. Metropolitan Jirjis accompanied them to Amid. They arrived in the city late in the afternoon on Friday, September 4. They held a meeting, presided over by Metropolitan Gregorius Tuma, to discuss the election of a new patriarch for the See of Antioch. Apparently, circumstances did not permit them to invite the rest of their fellow metropolitans. The Chorepiscopus ‘Abd Yeshu’ of Qusur, however, said in some of his comments that the meeting was attended by Gregorius Boghos (Paul), metropolitan of Bushairiyya, and Cyril Gewargis, metropolitan of Hattack. But what we copied from the register of Patriarch Shukr Allah contradicts what ‘Abd Yeshu’ of Qusur said: After nine days of deliberation, the bishops unanimously elected the metropolitan of Aleppo (Dionysius Jirjis) as the new patriarch, with the approval of the priests and laymen. The ordination was celebrated by Metropolitan Tuma, who invested the new patriarch with the patriarchal staff. The new patriarch was proclaimed as Ignatius Jirjis at the Church of the Virgin in Amid on Sunday, September 13, 2057 of the Greeks/1745 AD. The ceremony was attended by a great number of chorepiscopi, priests, deacons, and laity.<sup>73</sup> Some sources recounted the names of twenty priests, four archdeacons, and thirty-nine deacons of Amid who attended the consecration of the new patriarch.<sup>74</sup>

The Chorepiscopus Yeshu’, mentioned earlier, composed a Syriac ode exalting the new patriarch and fixing the date of his election.<sup>75</sup> The seal of the new patriarch, circular in shape, was inscribed as follows: “Ignatius Jirjis, Patriarch of Antioch, the year 2057 of the Greeks.” In the middle of the seal was fixed the portrait of a seated church dignitary, and beneath it the date 1745.<sup>76</sup> The new patriarch obtained a decree of investiture from the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud I (1143–1168 AH/1730–1754 AD) dated Shawwal 15, 1158 AH/late November 1745 AD. The new patriarch resided at Amid. He endorsed Saliba, son of Tumajan of Edessa, who had been the deputy of his predecessor in Constantinople, as his own deputy. He designated his nephew, the deacon ‘Abd Emmanuel of Edessa (1749–1768), as his secretary. He transferred Metropolitan Gurgis Sani’a from the diocese of Mardin to the

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<sup>73</sup> The account of the ordination of Patriarch Jirjis of Edessa, as recorded in the register of Patriarch Shukr Allah, is preserved in our Library.

<sup>74</sup> Amid MSS, at our Library.

<sup>75</sup> As recorded in the register of Patriarch Shukr Allah.

<sup>76</sup> MSS at our Library, which includes a great collection of ancient letters.

diocese of Amid, Metropolitan Cyril Gurgis 'Abd al-Jalil, from the diocese of Hattack to the diocese of Mardin and the Za'faran Monastery, and Metropolitan Jirjis of Aleppo from the diocese of Homs and the Monastery of Mar Julian to the diocese of Jerusalem.

The cause of his first and greatest apostolic act was his concern for the great diocese of Malabar in India. He appointed for it the Metropolitan Shukr Allah Qasabchi of Aleppo after elevating him to the dignity of the maphrianate. He sent with him to Malabar two metropolitans and several priests and deacons, as shall be seen later in the biography of the Maphryono Shukr Allah Qasabchi. He maintained correspondance with them to ascertain how they were faring in Malabar. This was undoubtedly an important act by this great church dignitary to promote the interests of the Holy Church of Antioch. Furthermore, Patriarch Jirjis continued the work of his predecessor by having important books translated into Arabic. The most important of these books was the *Commentary on the Gospels* by Mar Jacob bar Salibi. It was translated into Arabic of medium quality by the monk 'Abd al-Nur of Amid in 1755, as has been said earlier in the biography of Metropolitan Jirjis of Aleppo. In the same year, the first Arabic copy of this commentary was completed by the deacon Dawud, son of the priest Yaqub of Qusur.<sup>77</sup>

Under Patriarch Jirjis, the building of the Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem was completed, and the Church of Mar Iliyya (Elijah), in the village of Jaftelek near Mardin, was renovated in 1762.

Between 1757 and 1759 Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia) and Syria were afflicted with a severe drought and famine, and then by exorbitant prices for provisions, followed by plague, and many people perished. Natives of Mardin related that in 1756, the pomegranate, fig, and olive trees withered. Swarms of locusts stripped the crops, and people suffered hunger. In the winter of 1757, the prices of provisions skyrocketed, and starvation became so severe that some Kurds ventured to slaughter their own relatives in order to eat their flesh (God save us from this) and were hanged by the governor.<sup>78</sup> It seems that because of these calamities, the patriarch suffered financial problems and had to borrow seven purses to meet his needs in 1764. This debt was settled by his successor, Patriarch Jirjis IV, with his own money.<sup>79</sup>

Patriarch Jirjis III resided at Diyarbakr throughout the period of his patriarchate. He served the Apostolic See for twenty-two years, eight months,

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<sup>77</sup> Priest Yaqub, father of the deacon Dawud, said that his son Dawud died as a young man on the eve of the Festival of Ascension. He was twenty-five years old.

<sup>78</sup> MSS of Mardin in our own handwriting, preserved at our Library.

<sup>79</sup> The debt amounted to 3,500 piasters, estimated at 300 gold liras.

and twenty-two days. He died at Diyarbakr on July 7, 1768, having lived eighty years, forty-six of which were spent in serving the priesthood. He was buried in the tomb of the Patriarch 'Abd al-Masih I, his father's uncle, in the Syrian cemetery, outside the Rum Gate. He was the third and the last patriarch to be buried there. The date of his death was not marked on his grave.

Patriarch Jirjis III, may God be gracious to him, was known for his piety and venerableness. He was endowed with a respectable appearance in his old age, as can be seen from his portrait, preserved in one of the churches. Some ascribed to him a book of homilies, but this is uncertain. He took care of the city of Mardin for which he ordained several priests and deacons in 1747. He consecrated the Chrism at the Za'faran Monastery in 1753. After his death, the Apostolic See was vacant for forty days. He ordained twelve metropolitans and bishops, including two maphryonos for the See of the East and Malabar. These were:

### 1- DIONYSIUS SHUKR ALLAH, METROPOLITAN OF ALEPPO (1746–1748)

Dionysius Shukr Allah was son of the deacon Musa Qasabchi,<sup>80</sup> the son of Shim'un of Aleppo. He was born in Aleppo at the end of the first decade of the eighteenth century and raised in a household known for faith and piety. His father was a deacon who made a living by weaving silk cloth embroidered with silver and gold threads. This was an artistic craft with a booming market in Aleppo. His family excelled in this craft. His maternal grandfather was the deacon Yunan (Jonah), son of Shim'un, a priest of Aleppo. Yunan was ordained a deacon in 1703 and a priest in September 1708 by the Maphryono of the East, Basilus Ishaq (later Patriarch Ishaq), who was still living in 1739. So too were his three uncles: Jirjis, who was ordained a deacon in 1757 by Gregorius Jirjis of Aleppo, metropolitan of Jerusalem,<sup>81</sup> and the deacons Elias and Tuma, who were in 1785 still living with their sister, mother of our Dionysius Shukr Allah, as related by Patriarch Jirjis V of Aleppo.<sup>82</sup>

Shukr Allah received a proper upbringing characterized by piety. He was of good conduct, meek and intelligent. He acquired a good mastery of church

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<sup>80</sup> Qasabchi is a compound term of Arabic and Turkish, meaning the one who manufactures or sells silk cloth embroidered with silver threads. According to the dictionary *Taj al-Arus*, qasab is a material derived from silver. The singular of qasab is qasaba. The qasab is actually a thin and smooth linen.

<sup>81</sup> MSS Za'faran, the *Homologia* (Confession of Faith), Nos. 220 and 222.

<sup>82</sup> According to a Gospel MS we found at Homs.



sciences and a knowledge of the Syriac and Arabic languages. He became involved in spiritual life and in reading the theological writings of the fathers. He was ordained a deacon before 1728 and became a monk at the Monastery of Mar Musa the Abyssinian. Dionysius Jirjis (later Patriarch Jirjis III) added him to his staff and ordained him a priest, having great hopes for him. Joining Shukr Allah were some pious deacons inclined toward learning, who studied under him. Some of them became monks at the Monastery of Mar Musa the Abyssinian in the town of Nabk and later were ordained bishops. Among these were Gregorius Yuhanna Shuqayr, metropolitan of Damascus (d. 1783), and Dionysius ‘Abd Allah Shidyah of Aleppo, metropolitan of Aleppo and then of Damascus (d. 1801). Shukr Allah served the priesthood with excellence.

Shukr Allah wrote, in good Arabic, a medium-sized book on the principles of the Christian faith entitled *Tafhim al-Tadabir al-Muhyiyya li al-Atfal al-Masibiyya* (Explaining the Life-Giving Principles for Christian Children). The book consisted of an introduction and twenty-four chapters and gave an abundant exposition of the tenets of the orthodox faith, which attests to his profound knowledge of religion. We came upon three copies of it, one in Mosul, the second in ‘Aqra, and the third in Qal’at al-Imra’a. We transcribed a copy of it in our own handwriting in 1909. It is now preserved at our Library. He also transcribed, while still a deacon, a *Service Book for Lent and Passion Week*.<sup>83</sup> When the metropolitan see of Aleppo became vacant because its metropolitan ascended the patriarchal throne in 1745, the new patriarch ordained Shukr Allah a metropolitan for Aleppo in 1746, to replace him at the great church of Amid. He called him Dionysios Shukr Allah at his ordination. Shukr Allah proceeded to take care of his flock with his well-known piety, zeal and understanding. Aleppo did not enjoy him for long, however, because two years later the patriarch ordained him a maphryono and dispatched him as his apostolic legate to Malabar, India, together with a group of clergymen, as shall be seen later (p. 66).

## 2- IYAWANNIS YUHANNA, METROPOLITAN OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR BEHNAM AND THEN OF MALABAR (1747–1773)

Iyawannis was born Yuhanna (John), son of the priest Ishaq of Ba Khudayda (Qaraqosh); his mother was Shamma. He was born in Qaraqosh near Mosul about 1695.<sup>84</sup> At an early age he mastered the Syriac language and church

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<sup>83</sup> Sharfa Monastery, MSS 33-36.

<sup>84</sup> *tr. note*: It should be noted that he and Maphryono Yalda come from the same family.

rituals. He and his brother Saliba chose the life of piety. Iyawannis cloistered himself at the Church of the Virgin and of Yuhanna the Bosni in his village of Qaraqosh. He prepared himself for the monastic order and spent much time reading spiritual books. He was ordained a deacon before 1721 and then moved with his brother to the Monastery of Mar Behnam, where in 1723 they received the monastic habit from Iyawannis Karas, metropolitan of the diocese, who ordained them priests.<sup>85</sup> They remained at the monastery, persevering in devotion, until 1740, when they went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Upon their return, they resided at the Za'faran Monastery.<sup>86</sup>

When the diocese of Mar Behnam became vacant with the death of Metroploitan Karas, of blessed memory, on April 20, 1747, Patriarch Jirjis III ordained the elder brother, monk Yuhanna, a metropolitan for the diocese in the middle of the year and called him Iyawannis Yuhanna at his ordination. The new metropolitan faced opposition, however, because of a controversy between him and his flock, the people of Qaraqosh. The patriarch had already sent Metropolitan Cyril Gurgis to Mosul with the sultan's decree of investiture (of Metropolitan Iyawannis Yuhanna) to have it registered in the courts. The governor of Mosul, the Vizier Hajj Husayn Pasha al-Jalili, decided to send Metropolitan Cyril Gurgis to Qaraqosh to settle the problem between the metropolitan and the congregation. He wrote to the patriarch regarding what he had done. When Metropolitan Gurgis failed to reconcile the two sides, he reported the case to the pasha (the governor of Mosul), and he wrote to the patriarch about his failure to reconcile the metropolitan with his congregation. The pasha, too, wrote the patriarch about the same matter. The patriarch wrote the pasha, asking him to make an effort to keep Metropolitan Iyawannis Yuhanna in his diocese, and suggesting that if this failed he would empower the pasha to appoint a civilian as the Patriarch's deputy in Qaraqosh.<sup>87</sup> The reason for appealing to Husayn Pasha al-Jalili was that the big village of Qaraqosh had been given by the Ottoman sultan to the pasha, who collected its revenue, as a reward for defending the city of Mosul against the attack of the Persian Tahmasb Khan in 1743.

The patriarch removed Metropolitan Iyawannis Yuhanna from his diocese. In 1748, however, he made him an honorary metropolitan of

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<sup>85</sup> Qaraqosh MSS.

<sup>86</sup> The monk Saliba spent his life at the Za'faran Monastery. He was still living in 1757.

<sup>87</sup> A copy of the patriarch's appeal, written in Turkish in the language and style of the firmanas (sultan's decrees), is in the register of Patriarch Shukr Allah, preserved at our Library, from which we derived the above information.

Jerusalem, changed his name to Gregorius Yuhanna, and delegated him to Malabar in India. Gregorius journeyed to Baghdad via the river route, accompanied by Yuhanna of Mosul, a monk of the Za'faran Monastery, who was ordained a metropolitan in 1752.<sup>88</sup> The patriarch also sent to Baghdad Metropolitan Severus Yuhanna of Gargar, who was ordained a metropolitan for Malabar, together with the Chorepiscopus 'Abd al-Nur Aslan of Amid. They tarried in Baghdad for a while because of sickness, and then left the city.

Meantime, Gregorius and monk Yuhanna remained in Baghdad for eleven months, awaiting the arrival of Maphryono Shukr Allah (cf. p. 60, 66), head of the Indian mission. They patiently endured separation from their homeland, remaining firm in their determination to fulfill the mission assigned to them for the good of the Indian country (Malabar). On March 8, 1749, Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna accompanied the maphryono and his retinue to Basra. Then they sailed to Malabar, suffering incredible perils during the voyage. Gregorius shared the maphryono's toil and struggle. You will later see the story of Gregorius Yuhanna up to the death of the maphryono, in the biography of the latter.

Following the death of Mar Basilius (Maphryono Shukr Allah) on October 9, 1764, Gregorius Yuhanna assumed responsibility for the mission and the diocese in his place. But it happened that someone named Tuma, who styled himself as Tuma V<sup>89</sup> rebelled against the Apostolic See and with sheer audacity ordained a young relative to succeed him (as metropolitan) under the name of Tuma VI in 1765. Tuma V passed away in this same year, and his successor realized how precarious his position was. One Sunday, as Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna was celebrating the Eucharist at the Church of Niranam, Tuma VI entered the church unnoticed and went up to the altar. He fell at the feet of the metropolitan, kissing them and declaring his repentance. Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna stretched out his right hand, received him and pardoned him. A few days later, Gregorius Yuhanna celebrated the Holy Eucharist with Metropolitan Iyawannis Yuhanna (formerly known as the monk Yuhanna of Mosul, p. 78). Tuma VI was present. During the service, the metropolitan proclaimed Tuma VI as a lawful metropolitan and named him Dionysius. He handed him the pastoral staff, the cross, and the *systicon* (Letter of Investiture) which Patriarch Jirjis III had given to the maphryono (Shukr Allah), to be presented to Tuma V in case he became lawfully ordained. The

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<sup>88</sup> *tr. note:* In 1752, the monk Yuhanna was ordained a metropolitan at Malankara by the Maphryono Basilius Shukr Allah, who called him Iyawannis at his ordination. See David Daniel, *The Orthodox Church of India*, 1 (New Delhi, 1972), 69.

<sup>89</sup> *tr. note:* An unlawful metropolitan.

people of Malabar were filled with joy because of the reconciliation (of Tuma VI with the Apostolic See), which occurred on May 29, 1770. Gregorius Yuhanna, Iyawannis, and Dionysius Tuma resided in one church, ministering to the flock in unison.<sup>90</sup>

In 1773, Gregorius Yuhanna, burdened by old age and weak vision, almost lost his sight. A Malabarian monk named Curien (Quryaqos) Kattoomangat, a priest of the Church of Mulanthuruthi who had assumed the monastic habit by the hands of Maphryono Shukr Allah and was engaged for some time in the teaching of deacons, asked the two churchmen to permit him to take Gregorius Yuhanna to another town for care and treatment. The two men appreciated his good intentions, and Curien took Gregorius Yuhanna to Cochin and from there to the town of Mattancheri. He lodged him in the house of the maphryono, where Gregorius found some rest and enjoyed agreeable weather. What Curien did, however, was not for the sake of God or out of loyalty to the metropolitan, but for sheer self-interest. Apparently this monk had evil intentions. He was sick in heart and coveted a higher office. One day he put on the vestment of a bishop and claimed that Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna had ordained him a metropolitan and called him Cyril at his ordination. When the news spread throughout the town of Mattancheri, where the deacon Addai lived—he was a member of the retinue of the maphryono—Addai rushed to see Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna to ascertain the truth. The metropolitan told him that he had no knowledge of this rumor and that he had ordained no one. When Dionysius Tuma VI learned what had happened, he sent Iyawannis to Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna to find out the truth. Meanwhile, Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna had passed away on June 27, 1773, aged eighty years, and was buried in the Church of Mulanthuruthi. Iyawannis learned of his death while en route to see him. He was joined by a host of clergymen and laymen who journeyed to prepare the body of the metropolitan for burial. But the wicked Curien locked the door and would not let them in. Dionysius Tuma VI and those with him kept knocking at the door but received no response. They departed with great sorrow for the Church of Kandanad, about one-and-a-half hours' distance from Mulanthuruthi.

Meanwhile, the impudent Curien put on his chest the cross belonging to the late metropolitan, carried his staff, and seized his money and belongings. He began to behave like a lawfully ordained bishop. He found a pseudo-monk to work for him. He claimed to have ordained three young men as deacons.

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<sup>90</sup> *tr. note:* See E. M. Philip. *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, (Kerala, India, 2002), 161.

Dionysius and Iyawannis complained about Curien's behavior to the kings (rajas) of Travancore and Cochin, who referred the case to the Dutch Company, which protected the Christians and handled their private cases. Curien was summoned before the Assembly of Twelve Judges, who tried him and confirmed his deception and fabrication. They handed him and their verdict over to the Raja of Cochin. When the raja read the case, he became angry and handed Curien over to the Metropolitans Dionysius and Iyawannis. The metropolitans convened a great assembly of clergymen and laity and divested Curien of the office (of metropolitan), which he had usurped. They defrocked him. Moreover, Dionysius reordained lawfully the three deacons whom Curien had formerly ordained. Curien's pupil, the false monk, joined the cult of the Protesant Heldisians,<sup>91</sup> dabbled in sorcery, acted repulsively, and then died from a vicious disease. Three months later, Curien faked illness and went to British Malabar, ostensibly to seek medical treatment. The English Merchant Company ruled British Malabar, where the raja of Cochin had no authority, and there were no Christians (besides the English). There Curien built a church and resided in the town of Thorziyur, also called Anjoor. Still rebellious, he continued with his former shameless conduct.

Curien continued his life of witchcraft and corruption. He installed Gurgis, his half-brother, and Ibrahim, his nephew on his mother's side, as unlawful bishops. They ordained false bishops who lived until the middle of the nineteenth century, when they finally died off. In 1825, Curien's imposture was exposed when Metropolitan Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih of Amid got hold of the letter in which Curien alleged that Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna had ordained him a bishop. 'Abd al-Masih discovered that the letter was a forgery and that Curien had removed the seal of Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna from one of his letters and pasted it on the fake letter, as shall be seen later in the biography of Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih.<sup>92</sup> This was confirmed by historical Syriac tracts written by two Malabarian priests, the first in 1820 and the second in 1838.<sup>93</sup> The impostor Curien perished in 1802.

Some contemporary writers, including Philip Katanar and Metropolitan Awgen (Eugene), collected the chronicles of Malabar.<sup>94</sup> They claim that

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<sup>91</sup> *tr. note:* Waldensians?

<sup>92</sup> *tr. note:* I have not found the biography of Athanasius mentioned here. Perhaps it was never written.

<sup>93</sup> These two tracts were written in poor Syriac by some clergymen of Malabar and transcribed by other clergymen of Malabar. Both of them are at our Library.

<sup>94</sup> Philip was a secretary to Yusuf, the metropolitan of Malabar. He wrote *The History of Mar Tuma of India*, published in 1907. He died in 1909. The book, still a

Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna ordained Curien to spite Metropolitan Dionysius. He bequeathed to him the church vessels and plenty of money, specifying that they should be used to help the poor and treat the sick.<sup>95</sup> But these writers fail to corroborate their claim by citing contemporary historical sources. Indeed, ancient chronicles contradict this claim. It is well known that when a writer reports events to suit his own bias, his evidence does not stand.

Gregorius Yuhanna was well versed in the Syriac language. We came upon a few lines of verse on repentance composed by him in the Sarugite (twelve-syllabic) meter when he was still a youth in 1719. They are as follows:

He who fixes his eyes on one goal, that of salvation  
Will naturally find what will sharpen his entire sensation and disposition.  
In order to attain that goal, he should fasten unto it his heart and mind,  
and spend everything he has for its cause.<sup>96</sup>

### 3- BASILIUS SHUKR ALLAH, MAPHRYONO OF MALABAR (1748–1764)

Basilus Shukr Allah was a prominent church dignitary in the same vein as the apostles. He was of unique spirituality and commendable character. He was one of the stars who shone in the firmament of his native city, Aleppo, and the church.

His biography, up to the time when he became head of the diocese of Aleppo in 1764, has been set forth earlier (p. 60). When the knowledge of his erudition and capability spread as far as India, he was chosen by the Syrian people of India (Malabar) to become their maphryono. Patriarch Jirjs III, who better than anyone else recognized his excellence and his ability to shoulder responsibility, invited him to accept the noble office of the maphrianate and to preach orthodoxy in that remote land. Shukr Allah, known for his piety, meekness, and religious zeal, obeyed. The patriarch ordained him a maphryono for Malabar and called him Basilus Shukr Allah at his ordination at the church of Amid in August 1748. He was assisted by Cyril Gurgis Sani'a, metropolitan

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manuscript, is preserved in our Library. Metropolitan Eugene wrote a collection in Syriac in 1932. [*tr. note*: The reference here is to E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, (Edavazhikal: Tottayam, 1908; reprinted by Mor Adai Study Center, ed. Dr. Kuriakos Corepiscopa Moolayil, Cheeranchira, Chngancheryr: Kerala, 2002.)]

<sup>95</sup> *tr. note*: See E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 161–162.

<sup>96</sup> This ode is fixed at the end of Bar Hebraeus's *Kthobo d-Zalge* (Book of Rays), a compendium of his *Lamp of the Sanctuaries*, at the Library of the Monastery of Mar Matta.

of Amid. The Patriarch handed him a quantity of *mirun* (Holy Chrism), a staff, a cross and a *systaticon*, to be delivered to Metropolitan Tuma V of Malabar. He charged Basilius to ordain Tuma as a lawful metropolitan and hand him his personal *systaticon*.

On August 25, the new maphryono returned to Aleppo, only to fall sick again from the ailment he had suffered two months before his ordination. Nevertheless, he went on to provide himself with the necessary religious, theological, and liturgical books and church vessels. He acquired eighteen manuscripts, all but one important. Three of them were transcribed in the Estrangelo script on vellum. We shall have more to say about them later.

Since the land route between Aleppo and Baghdad was cut off by a great number of highway robbers who intercepted travelers, pillaging and killing, the maphryono waited for four months for a large caravan in order to be able to travel. Such a caravan was not available until January 7, 1750. The maphryono left Aleppo accompanied by his private deacon and the Chorepiscopus Jirjis, son of the Chorepiscopus Ni'mat Allah Tunburchi of Aleppo, deacon Anton, son of the priest Sim'an of Aleppo, who had come from Malabar to join the maphryono on his journey. Leaving for Baghdad ahead of him were the priest Shukr Allah and the deacons Shukr Allah of Amid, Hidayat Allah, Musa, and Zechariah,<sup>97</sup> in addition to Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna of Khudayda (Qaraqosh), the monk-priest Yuhanna of Mosul, a monk of the Za'faran Monastery, and his attendant 'Abd Allah. The patriarch sent with them forty-six manuscripts of religious and service books and church vessels, as shall be seen later.

After traveling through open and unpopulated country, suffering incredible fear of the Arabs of the Dulaym tribe, and incurring heavy expenses, Maphryono Basilius Shukr Allah and his Aleppine companions arrived in Baghdad. They were joined by the clerics who had gone ahead of them to the city. The whole group journeyed to Basra, arriving in that city on May 8. On June 24 they left Basra and, after anchoring at the ports of Bandar Bushir, Bandar Abbas, and Surat, arrived at the port of Cochin, Malabar, on April 23, 1751, which was the festival day of Mar Jirjis the martyr. During the journey, they suffered incredible perils from highwaymen, pirates, gales, and disease. They endured these perils with remarkable Christian patience. The journey cost them about 9500 rupees, in addition to 200 rupees which deacon Anton had

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<sup>97</sup> Deacon Zechariah is mentioned in the tract of Chorepiscopus Jirjis. The other deacons are mentioned in a letter by the patriarch and in some chronicles of India, which call one Deacon Addai instead of Hidayat Allah. Deacon Addai was still living in 1770.

with him when he joined the group. At Cochin the travelers heaved a sigh of relief and enjoyed rest. The judge and the president of the Dutch Company went out to receive them.<sup>98</sup> At the citadel of Cochin they were greeted by soldiers in arms. Halfway on the road to the citadel, they were met by the Deputy Commodore. When they reached the commodore's mansion, His Excellency was waiting for them at the gate. As the guns fired in salute he welcomed them and led them to the upper hall, where a host of prominent company officials received them and had lunch with them at the commodore's table. They left, accompanied by the president of the company, to the house prepared for their residence. It was a nice house with a beautiful garden. His Excellency instructed the chief interpreter to take care of their expenses.

On April 24, after discussing some matters with the commodore, Maphryono Basilius wrote to Metropolitan Yuhanna and to the self-styled Metropolitan Tuma informing them of his arrival and asking them to come to the citadel (of Cochin) so that Tuma might be reconciled to him in the presence of the commodore. On May 2, Tuma sent to the maphryono two priests, a deacon and several Syrian notables, with a letter in which he complained against the behavior of Metropolitan Yuhanna of Amid. Tuma requested that the monk Yuhanna and the deacon Anton be sent to him, along with the church service books and the *systatikon* brought by the maphryono. The maphryono agreed and sent these dignitaries to Pallikari with the books but not the *systatikon*. On May 6, the two messengers returned, carrying a second letter

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<sup>98</sup> The Portuguese were the first Franks (Europeans) to colonize India in the time of their King Emmanuel I, following the opening of the sea route to India by the Portuguese navigator Vasco de Gama in 1498. On the coast, they set up markets which were like Portuguese colonies for the exchange of native goods. Through the Portuguese, some Latins (Roman Catholics) entered India and spread their faith by many means. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Dutch followed in the footsteps of the Portuguese and founded similar markets. They overwhelmed the Portuguese and evicted them from India because of the weakness of their country. They established the East India Dutch Company, which consisted of businessmen and sailors. They ruled some parts of the country until the middle of the eighteenth century, when the French and then the British overwhelmed them and controlled Malabar, which had been under Dutch authority. But the islands of Java and Sumatra, with a population of thirty million, were still under Dutch control. In 1858, the English Merchant Company surrendered its properties to the British government. As the Portuguese had propagated their Latin (Catholic) faith in their colonies, the English did likewise, propagating their Protestant faith in India from the start of the nineteenth century. As is well known, such propagation had its worst effect on the Syrian congregation of Malabar.



from Tuma asking the maphryono to come to Kandanaḍ because for some reason he was unable to come to the citadel. The maphryono kept waiting for Metropolitan Yuhanna of Amid, who arrived on the fourteenth of the month, on the eve of the Festival of the Virgin Mary, accompanied by priests and a group of laymen, most important of whom was Yaḡub Yaṇi, chief treasurer of the king.<sup>99</sup> On May 16, Seignior Ezekiel Jawhari visited the maphryono and suggested that he write a third letter to Tuma. The maphryono wrote a letter and sent it with Yaḡub Yaṇi and the deacon Anton, but it suffered the same consequence as the earlier letters. Tuma excused himself, telling the delegation of the Chorepiscopus Jirjis that he was busy with the affairs of his congregation and therefore could not see the maphryono. The truth was that he feared to come to the citadel, lest the commodore force him to repay the money, a penalty too great for him to bear. When the commodore realized that Tuma had shamefully reneged and violated his commitment, that he displayed unexpected malice and wickedness, and that he refused to visit the maphryono though the maphryono had written to him asking him kindly to come to him, he advised the maphryono to complain against him to the Dutch Company. The maphryono did so. On May 22, the company sent its chief interpreter and a high-ranking officer with twenty-four soldiers, accompanied by the deacon Anton, to Pallikari to bring back the defendant (Tuma). But when Tuma learned from some of his friends about the situation, he escaped to another town. When the soldiers arrived at Pallikari and found that Tuma had fled with his followers and left the house locked, the chief interpreter became angry and ordered the soldiers to break the doors of the church and loot some of its possessions. Seeing what the soldiers had done, the people became furious and requested their Indian raja to dispatch a thousand soldiers for help. The soldiers rushed to the spot, arrested the officers of the company, and informed its president of the situation. The company's president and officials became angry and wrote to the raja, denouncing what the soldiers had done. The raja returned the looted objects to their owners. The company was almost ready to strike down the interpreter and the high ranking officer, had it not been for the intercession of the maphryono and his men.

On the fourth day after his arrival, Metropolitan Yuhanna Araqchini of Amid began to treat the maphryono and other fathers harshly because they had been kind to the natives who visited them. He thought that the natives should be treated cruelly and bluntly. His behavior convinced them of the reports they had already received about his rough treatment of the Syrian natives. But when

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<sup>99</sup> In the original text, Yaḡub is mentioned as Bazargan, meaning chief merchant or money changer. More correctly, he was the king's treasurer.

Yuhanna persisted in his bad treatment of the natives despite the maphryono's advice, the maphryono and his men complained to the governor to detain him in the citadel and then ship him back to the East, according to the patriarch's order. Metropolitan Yuhanna was sent back home in November, the usual month for the departure of ships.

On the afternoon of July 3, the festival of St. Thomas the Apostle, the maphryono and his men left the citadel. They took leave of the commodore, who had nine guns fired in their honor. They were accompanied by two of the company's high officials, forty soldiers, and Seignior Ezekiel. They paid a short visit to the raja of Cochin, to whom the maphryono and Metropolitan Yuhanna<sup>100</sup> presented five gold pieces worth twenty five rupees, which they had received from the commodore. They spent the night at the house of Ezekiel, and on the next day, Thursday, departed Cochin for Kandanad on the company's boat. They were accompanied by the new chief interpreter and some soldiers who had been sent by the raja. The Syrian congregation received them, and in great deference, carried the two church dignitaries in litters. They marched in a solemn procession, chanting according to their customs. The Syrian people of Kandanad asked the maphryono to provide them with a letter to Tuma in order to bring him back to the city, and the maphryono responded to their request. But their luck was no better than that of those who tried before to summon Tuma to the maphryono's presence. On July 18 they returned with Tuma's reply, complaining of the soldiers and of the deacon Anton's bad treatment of the villagers of Pallikari.

Meanwhile, on July 18, the raja of the south marched against the raja of Cochin. Seized by fright, the natives hid their belongings and had their women and children flee. Malabar was in turmoil. The maphryono and his retinue, who were at this time at Kandanad, were also seized by fear. The Chorepiscopus Jirjis of Aleppo, whose account is our source, said, "For twenty years this raja (of the south) had invaded the lands of two rajas and caused them to flee. He seized great wealth and became abundantly rich. He lavished money on his fighting men, enticing many to join him. He was extremely cruel, burning houses and churches without mercy. He was like the Persian Tahmasb (Nadir Shah, who invaded Iraq in the time of Patriarch Shukr Allah and Maphryono Li'azar VI). Nevertheless, he honored the maphryono and his retinue and abstained from pillaging Kandanad. This action shows that he was not totally void of honor. But the dispersion of the people and the rupture of their society

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<sup>100</sup> *tr. note:* Not to be confused with the Metropolitan Yuhanna Araqchinch, mentioned earlier.

prevented the maphryono from collecting money to settle the debt he had incurred.”

We find it proper to present here the account of the journey of this venerable church dignitary as he wrote it down himself in a Syriac tract whose original is preserved in Malabar. We have translated it into Arabic exactly as it was after publishing the original Syriac.

Account of the journey to the Land of Malabar of Mar Basilius Shukr Allah, Metropolitan Mar Gregorius Yuhanna, the Chorepiscopus Jirjis, and the Monk Yuhanna, accompanied by the deacons.<sup>101</sup>

In the middle of March 1748,<sup>102</sup> the deacon Anton arrived in the city of Aleppo, carrying letters from the Metropolitan Mar Iyawannis (Araqchinch) of Amid<sup>103</sup> and from Mar Tuma,<sup>104</sup> to Patriarch Mar Ignatius Gurgis (Jirjis) III of Antioch and to Mar Basilius. At that time I, Basilius, was ill. After reading the letters, I sent the letter of my lord Mar Ignatius to him in the city of Amid (Diyarbakr), and also wrote informing him that I had been sick for two months. Meanwhile, Deacon Anton went to see our lord the patriarch and informed him that the Syrians of Malabar were requesting a maphryono, as it is written in the letters of Mar Iyawannis and Mar Tuma. When I recovered, I journeyed to Amid to see the Patriarch Mar Ignatius. The city of Amid was about fifteen days' distance from Aleppo. I left Aleppo on July 1, and we were attacked by highway robbers, but, by God's help, they could not harm us. At Amid, I was ordained a maphryono. I returned to Aleppo a few days later, on August 25.

While I was sick, Patriarch Mar Ignatius sent Mar Gregorius to Malabar along with another metropolitan and a chorepiscopus.<sup>105</sup> They traveled via the River Tigris and reached the famous city of Babylon (Baghdad). Soon, however, the metropolitan and the chorepiscopus returned to Amid because of sickness, while Mar Gregorius remained in Baghdad awaiting

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<sup>101</sup> This title is not original; it was added by the copyist.

<sup>102</sup> 1749 in the original Syriac text.

<sup>103</sup> See his biography in *Al-Majalla Al-Patriarchiyya* 6, no. 5 (1939).

<sup>104</sup> Tuma of Malabar, who claimed that he had been ordained a bishop by his uncle in 1728. He died in 1765, still rebellious and unrepentant.

<sup>105</sup> Gregorius was Yuhanna of Khudayda (Qaraqosh), metropolitan of the Monastery of Mar Behnam, who was removed from his diocese and sent to Malabar. We published his biography in *Al-Majalla Al-Patriarchiyya* 7 No. 1 (1940), 19-24. The other metropolitan was Yuhanna of Gargar, who was ordained a metropolitan for Malabar in 1748 and then was appointed a metropolitan of Gargar. His biography will come later. The Chorepiscopus was 'Abd al-Nur, son of Aslan of Amid. It appears from what the maphryono has said that he wrote this tract immediately after his arrival in Malabar.

my arrival. Meanwhile, I was trying to find a caravan bound for Baghdad (because of fear of desert robbers) but could not find one. Thus, I remained for four months in Aleppo before I found a camel caravan going to Baghdad. I bought, for 3,000 rupees, what was necessary for the journey and for the church, including vessels, books, and other wares.

On Sunday, January 7, 1749,<sup>106</sup> I, together with the Chorepiscopus,<sup>107</sup> the deacon Aton, and my attendant, left Aleppo in the caravan traversing a desolate desert. On Sunday, January 28, we were attacked by a great number of highway robbers who fought with the men of the caravan for fifteen hours. Two Turkish men in the caravan were killed and many wounded, not to mention a number of horses and camels which perished. Afterwards, the leader of another robbers' band saved us from those who had attacked us, and exacted from the leaders of the caravan 9,000 gold pieces, each worth three rupees. Moreover, he seized our books and belongings and asked to be paid a great amount of silver as ransom. After our incredible distress, he exacted from us 1,500 rupees and released our books and belongings. We thanked God for rescuing us from death and the robbers. If God had not sent this leader of the robber band to rescue us, those robbers who attacked us first would have looted the whole caravan and all our belongings and killed us. We arrived at a town called 'Ana,<sup>108</sup> where we spent two months. But no one dared step outside for fear of the highway robbers.<sup>109</sup>

At the beginning of April we sailed the River Euphrates to Hilla and then to Baghdad, at great expense.<sup>110</sup> When we entered Baghdad, we met

<sup>106</sup> This date is incorrect, a copyist's error. Actually it is 1750, as the Chorepiscopus Jirjis has written.

<sup>107</sup> He was Jirjis, the son of the Chorepiscopus Ni'mat Allah Tunburchi of Aleppo. He was ordained a priest in 1745 and left Malabar at the end of 1751 because of sickness, having spent seven months there. He wrote a thirty page tract in Arabic describing Maphryono Shukr Allah's journey to Malabar and the conditions of Malabar and its Syrian people. He completed this tract on November 1, of the year 2063 of the Greeks/1751 AD. He sailed from Basra via Jedda to Abyssinia.

<sup>108</sup> A town overlooking the Euphrates, situated between al-Raqqa and Hit.

<sup>109</sup> This is because of a fight between the people of 'Ana and the Arabs of Shammar. The Chorepiscopus Jirjis said, "Our journey was delayed because of this fight, and the overflow of the Euphrates was late. We became short of money and were forced to sell some of our belongings in order to buy provisions. Also, we borrowed a hundred rupees, while the leaders of the caravan took from us fifty piasters. Then a customhouse official came from Baghdad and collected the customs duty from us."

<sup>110</sup> The Chorepiscopus Jirjis said that when they reached Hilla, they were informed that both land and river highways were cut off, and they could not continue to Basra

our brother Metropolitan Gregorius. But the Metropolitan (Severus) and the Chorepiscopus ('Abd al-Nur) had already departed for Amid because of sickness. Mar Gregorius suffered all the adversities which plagued him but never turned back. He remained in Baghdad for eleven months, until we met him and Rabban (monk) Yuhanna in that city. We hired a ship, and all of us came to Basra via the River Tigris, having spent about 500 rupees.

On Tuesday, May 8, we arrived in Basra and met with the president of the (Dutch) Company, named Manhar Kenifus (*sic*), who rented a house for us for eighty rupees. When we asked him to reimburse us for our passage and the journey's expenses, he said that he could not pay us from the company's funds because he had no authorization from the company officials. Promptly, Deacon Anton said to him that he had with him a letter from the respected commodore addressed to the previous president of the company, who had left Basra, instructing him to pay the expenses of the maphryono and his companions from the company's money. Kenifus insisted that he would not pay a penny from the company's treasury. But he said that if the maphryono and his companions agreed, he would pay them from his own pocket an amount with twenty percent interest (that is, 80 rupees for 100) to aid them until they reached Cochin. So we had to borrow money because the creditors in both Aleppo and Basra were pressuring us to pay our debts, and would not permit us to leave Basra otherwise. Furthermore, we needed a great amount of money for the passage from Basra to Cochin. The problem was that we had to journey to Malabar. So, we borrowed from Kenifus 6,660 rupees plus 1,334 in interest, making a total of 8000 rupees. He also took from us a promissory note for this amount. From this amount we paid him eighty rupees for the rent of the house in Basra. We hired an English ship (since no ship of the Dutch Company was available) which cost us 700 rupees, deducted from the amount we had borrowed from Kenifus. We also paid from the same amount our expenses for food in Basra and aboard the English ship. Moreover, we spent too much money because of the famine in Basra, which was so severe that wheat became extremely costly. Nevertheless, we were forced to buy necessary food provisions in Basra.

On Sunday, June 24 (1750), we left Basra for the citadel of Bushir, where we were welcomed by an official of the Dutch Company. But no sooner had we departed Bushir than a southern storm raged. If it had not been for the intercession of Mary, Mother of God, we would have been drowned in the depths of the sea. From Bushir we came to the port of Bandar 'Abbas, where the president, named Manhar Salendrut (*sic*) received us with a great welcome. On the day of our arrival, another ship

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without going first to Baghdad. So they did, and this detour cost them over a hundred rupees.

also arrived—from Batavia.<sup>111</sup> Her captain told the president of the company that after ten days a ship would be coming from Batavia. The president and his men asked us to stay in Bandar ‘Abbas until its arrival. He said that as soon as this ship unloaded, he would send us aboard it to Cochin. He added that with this ship we would have an easy sail because it was large, and the ship on which we had come was too small. After all, he argued, the ship was bound for Bombay, and if we decided to continue the voyage on the ship in which we had come, we would bear heavy expenses. After hearing these words, we remained in Bandar ‘Abbas for twenty days until the ship finally arrived from Batavia. We were overwhelmed with joy to see her come. Some days later, the president (of the Dutch Company) unloaded the ship. In the meantime, we bought necessary provisions and sent our baggage on board. But two or three days before our departure, a rumor circulated that pirates were on their way to pillage the port of Bandar ‘Abbas. When the president of the company heard the rumor, he would not let the ship leave, and we were seized by great fear. Soon another report circulated that those pirates had killed their leader and fled. It happened then that the chieftains of Persia were fighting each other and their fighting had intensified. One of these chieftains drew near the port (Bandar ‘Abbas). The president of the company feared this chieftain and would not let us leave. But no other ship was available. Thus we remained at this port for seven months, suffering great distress, fear, various sicknesses and pain, in addition to spending 1,000 rupees. The chorepiscopus fell ill and has remained so until now.

On February 24, 1751 (the year 2062 of the Greeks), we left this port (Bandar ‘Abbas) with the company’s men, on board one of its ships, and arrived at the port of Surat. Before the ship entered the harbor, we were attacked by two big pirate ships and twelve small ones which fought us for five hours. But the pirates could not overwhelm us and fled. On Sunday, March 17, our ship docked at the harbor, and God saved us from those pirates. We remained on board and did not disembark at Surat until the president sent a boat to carry us from our ship to another one which carried us to Cochin. Before we entered the port of Cochin, however, we confronted a ferocious peril caused by a strong wind and rain. We became mightily distressed, but God saved us. Truly, our case was summarized in the words of the prophet David, who said “All your waves and breakers have swept over me” (Psalm 42:7). Finally, the ship entered the harbor of the city of Cochin. The venerable commodore (of the Dutch Company) sent us a big company boat, which carried us to the port safely. We greeted him and broke bread with him on that day. We entered the port of Cochin

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<sup>111</sup> *tr. note:* The Dutch name Batavia may refer to any of several locations, but here the direction of travel indicates that the ship was coming from Holland.

on Tuesday, April 23, which was the festival of Mar Jirjis the martyr, in the year 2062 of the Greeks/1751 AD.

The respected commodore had us await the arrival of Mar Iyawannis and Tuma, in order that they might reconcile and establish peace with each other. Twenty days after we entered the port, Metropolitan Iyawannis arrived, but Tuma did not. We wrote to him four friendly letters in succession, but he did not obey or come to meet with us. Metropolitan Iyawannis, however, kept quarreling with us every two or three days. He disagreed with our kind treatment of the native (Syrian) Christians and rather wanted us to treat them harshly. Every day he would antagonize those who came to visit us, beating some of them and insulting others. For this reason, we detained him at the port until a ship was available and decided to send him back to the Patriarch Mar Ignatius of Antioch. Mar Ignatius had in fact written us regarding him saying, "If Metropolitan (Iyawannis) behaves himself, keep him, or else send him back to us." The Dutch Company bore the expenses of all our needs.

When the respected commodore and the company's officials saw that Tuma had not come to meet with us, he allowed us to travel to Kandanad, hoping that Tuma would relent, obey our summons, and present himself to us. But he did not. The amount the company spent for us for seventy-two days totaled 429 rupees.

On Wednesday, July 3, the day of the festival of the Apostle St. Thomas, we left the port and visited the raja of Cochin. We were accompanied by the company's men and soldiers and by the Jew Ezekiel Jawhari.<sup>112</sup> We met the raja and spent a short time in his presence. We presented him with five gold pieces, each one worth five rupees, which we had received from the honorable governor. We spent the night at the house of Ezekiel, and on Thursday, July 4, we arrived in Kandanad.

The following is a breakdown of our debts to the company:

We owed the company 8,000 rupees which we borrowed in Basra, and 1,000 rupees in Bandar 'Abbas. The company also demanded from us the payment of 2,000 rupees which Metropolitan Iyawannis had borrowed from it and given to Deacon Anton when he dispatched him to the Patriarch of Antioch. The deacon, however, spent the money on himself. The amount the company demanded from us totaled 11,454 rupees, not

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<sup>112</sup> *tr. note:* In 1751, when the maphryono and his clerics arrived in Cochin, the raja was Marthanda Varma of Travancore. This raja had conquered and annexed petty principalities, one of which was Cochin. It is most likely that the maphryono met this maharaja. Ezekiel was a Jew from Mattancherry. See F. E. Keay, *A History of the Syrian Church in India*, 3rd. ed. (Delhi, 1960), 62.

counting one rupee a day spent by the metropolitan. Here ends the account of what happened to us and the debt we have incurred.<sup>113</sup>

Following is a list of the transcribed religious books and church vessels which Patriarch Mar Ignatius Jirjis III sent to Malabar with Maphryono Basilius Shukr Allah and Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna in 1749. Their total number was forty-six ancient books. They include five Syriac Gospels, thirteen *fanqithos* (Service Books) for winter and summer seasons, four *busoyos* (supplicatory prayers) for both winter and summer seasons, eight liturgies, three ancient Syriac copies of the Old Testament, *The Commentary on the Gospels* by Bar Salibi, the *Nomocanon* (Book of Directions) by Bar Hebraeus, three copies of Psalms, a copy of the *Ishhim* (Service Book for Weekdays), a *Funeral Service Book*, the *Order of Unction*, church canons, and four books containing commentaries and church canons.

The church vessels included a chalice and a paten, two crosses, three staffs, two plates for collection, two bells, a censer, two pairs of fans, three brass candlesticks, three pairs of cymbals, a jar of Holy Chrism, three crosses from Jerusalem, and relics of saints and other objects.

The maphryono also brought with him three magnificent ancient manuscripts written in the Estrangelo script on vellum, and two other ancient manuscripts. The total number of manuscripts was eighteen, plus one printed book. They included a vellum copy of the Pentateuch in the Estrangelo script, a vellum copy of the Gospels in the Estrangelo script and studded with silver, a copy of the *Acts of the Councils* in the Estrangelo script, the book of Mar Dionysius the Areopagite, an ancient *Beth Gazzo* (Book of Church Melodies), a *Commentary on the Gospels* by Bar Salibi, a *Commentary on Revelation* in Syriac, a copy of the Psalms, *The Cause of all Causes*, the book of Eupdox, a *Service Book of Hymns for Principal Feasts*, three copies of a Syriac grammar, a *Service Book on the*

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<sup>113</sup> The Chorepiscopus Jirjis related that Deacon Anton, who had come to Aleppo and then to Amid to seek the maphryono and his entourage in order to accompany him to Malabar, was greedy, poor in reasoning, and given to exaggerating promises. He deceived them with false hopes by overstating his ability to achieve their objectives. Jirjis criticized him severely for mismanaging their affairs and thereby causing them many problems. [*tr. note*: The account of the journey of Maphryono Basilius Shukr Allah to Malabar is translated into English by Philip, a native Syrian writer of Malabar, based on a Syriac manuscript in his possession. There is slight difference between it and the translation given above. Strangely, Philip does not mention the names of the Dutch commodore or the chief officials of the Dutch Company. See E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas* (Cheeranchira, Changanacherry, Kerala, 2002, pp. 157-195 under note 8.)]



*Fast of Nineveh*, a *Service Book of Funerals*, and a printed copy of the *Ishhim* (Service Book for Weekdays). You may imagine that the cost of these precious ancient manuscripts exceeded the amounts spent for our passage.

When Tuma showed stubbornness, false affection, and sickness of heart and mind, the maphryono and Mar Gregorius reported his behavior to the patriarch on December 16 (1751). The patriarch replied on August 27, 1752, commending them for their struggle and patience. He comforted and encouraged them and wished them well. He revealed his displeasure about Tuma's rebellious behavior, prevarication, and arrogance.<sup>114</sup> When two years had passed and the situation did not change, the patriarch issued a general proclamation in Syriac to the clergy and congregations of Malabar reprimanding Tuma for his intransigence. He declared that it was Tuma who had insisted and urgently appealed to him to dispatch Maphryono Shukr Allah alone to Malabar. Tuma had also promised to pay all the expenses of the maphryono's passage. But, said the patriarch, Tuma reneged on his commitment and proved that he had no sense of responsibility. He went on to say that Tuma had been rebellious and for three years made no effort to visit the maphryono and Metropolitan Yuhana. Moreover, he did not pay any amount, big or small, or allow these church dignitaries to try to reform him. The patriarch ended by saying that if Tuma did not amend his behavior he should be condemned. Meanwhile, the patriarch wrote to Seigneur Gurian Steonis (*sic*), the governor of the citadel of Cochin and the administrator of Malabar, explaining Tuma's behavior and imploring him to take good care of the two church dignitaries. He further asked him to convince Tuma and have him tried, in order to reform his behavior, and to reach an agreement with the two fathers of the church. If he obeyed, the patriarch would confer on him lawful ordination. If he disobeyed, the Apostolic See would consider him an enemy. The patriarch wrote the same words to Seigneur Ezekiel. But these efforts (of the patriarch) and those of the maphryono and his men were fruitless. Tuma, that wolf of petrified heart, persisted in his whimsical actions and arrogance. Unfortunately, some contemporary historians of Malabar try to justify his misdeeds, claiming that what actually led him to prevaricate was the enormous amount of money demanded from him, which he was unable to pay.

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<sup>114</sup> *tr. note:* This letter of Patriarch Jirjis III, dated August 27, 1752, was written in Garshuni. It was transliterated into Arabic script by the late Patriarch Ephraim I, Barsoum probably in 1909 when he was still a monk at the Za'faran Monastery. Written in colloquial Arabic, the copy is in my possession. Also, this account is not mentioned by E. M. Philip which indicates that it is not in the original text but an interpolation by Barsoum.

This utterly futile pretext, however, could not absolve a fraction of Tuma's intransigence or his transcending the boundaries of religion and social decorum. Some writers falsely alleged that, soon after their arrival, the maphryono and his companions interfered in the administration of the churches without consulting with Tuma, contrary to the tradition of the bishops of Malabar. Obviously this claim, if right, still could not vindicate Tuma's repulsive behavior, but in fact it has no truth whatever. Indeed, the seventy-two days the fathers (the maphryono and the metropolitan) and their companions spent in Cochin were only to seek relief from the awful perils which threatened their lives, and to communicate with Iyawannis and Tuma. In fact, they had no church building available to conduct religious services or ordinations.

The Chorepiscopus Jirjis, as mentioned earlier, has readily related the names of the churches which were then populated and the number of houses of Syrian parishioners. Likewise, in the detailed account of his journey, he said that no one came to visit or greet them in Cochin except a few priests and laymen who happened to be living near by. In view of that, how could those biased writers ignore the great authority of the maphryono in the church of God, let alone the fact that he was a delegate of the Apostolic See? And how could they contrive excuses to vindicate a pretender who more than any other cleric needed to have the maphryono bestow on him the lawful priestly office by the laying on of his hands. Many years had passed since Tuma and his predecessor began knocking at the door of the Apostolic See, asking for a chief priest to confer upon them the office of the episcopate. Unfortunately, their letters had been lost or had fallen into European hands and never reached their destination. Many problems prevented the Syrians of Malabar from obtaining their desired objective. Now that this objective was to become a reality, Tuma shunned it. How can we discredit the letters of the patriarch and the accounts of Maphryono (Shukr Allah) himself and the Chorepiscopus Jirjis, both of whom were eyewitnesses? How can we overlook their letters, which constitute authentic documents and solid evidence, and lean on the fragile reed of allegations by modern writers who distort the facts to suit their purpose, a fact which has become well known in our time? If at that time the clergy and laity of the Syrian congregation of Malabar seemed silent or indifferent to the truth, it was because of the disgraceful inertia, ignorance, and psychological attitude which characterized the society of Malabar, as has been observed by contemporary writers.

When the fathers (the maphryono and the metropolitan) saw the arrogance of Tuma and his partisans, the maphryono ordained monk Yuhanna of Mosul as metropolitan for Malabar and called him Iyawannis Yuhanna at his ordination in the church of Kandanad, which occurred at the end of 1752 or

the beginning of 1753. He sent the new metropolitan to Tuma's headquarters to administer the congregation and built with his own money a bishopric and a church at the town of Mattancheri in the province of Cochin, which had no church or bishopric. The maphryono, Metropolitan Gregorius, and the deacons resided at the bishopric he had built. He proceeded to administer the churches of Malabar with fatherly kindness, apostolic zeal, wisdom, and determination. He persevered in inculcating religious learning and church discipline. An ancient historian of Malabar testified to his sagacity, wisdom, competence in religious sciences, and erudition. Many priests and deacons studied the Holy Scriptures and church rites under him. However, contemporary writers have belittled him and stingily denied him the praise he deserves.

The maphryono and the metropolitan issued necessary rules and orders and communicated with all parts (of Malabar). They were intent on purging the orthodox faith from the tares of heresies and objectionable customs that the Syrians of Malabar were practicing. They and the deacons taught a choice group of clergy religious sciences and prepared them to assume clerical offices. They abolished the celibacy of priests. Meanwhile, Maphryono Shukr Allah consecrated the Holy Christ.

Regarding the debt mentioned above, we have no idea how it was settled and no reliable ancient testimony concerning it. However, we have read in the writings of some contemporaries that the Dutch Company forced the government of Travancore to pressure Tuma and threaten him with banishment if he declined to pay the necessary amount. Tuma paid some of the amount from the revenues of some churches; the rest he paid from the endowment of the Church of Niranam, which was sold. Philip admitted that Tuma was evasive and would not settle his problem with the (Dutch) Company.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> *tr. note:* Philip says that because of his inability to pay the debt of 12,000 rupees to the Dutch Company, a warrant was issued by the government of Travancore to arrest Tuma if he failed to pay the debt. Scared, Tuma went into hiding for sometime. In despair, he consecrated his successor under the title of Tuma (Thomas) VI. Meantime, some of the debt was partially paid by money collected from the Syrian churches and the sale of properties belonging at Nairam. Philip concludes that Tuma failed to attain the greatest ambition of his life (to be consecrated a lawful bishop) not on account of any fault in his part, but through his inability to satisfy the demands of the Dutch Company. See Philip, pp. 156-157. F. E. Keay, *A History of the Syrian Church in India*, p. 62, says the Raja of Travancore, Marthanda Varma, compelled Tuma to pay the amount claimed.

After administering those vast regions competently for thirteen years and some months, Maphryono Shukr Allah was called home by his heavenly Chief Shepherd to be given a crown worthy of a faithful steward. He passed away on October 9, 1764, and was buried in the church of Kandanad. Metropolitan Gurgis of Niranam (of blessed memory) and Philip mentioned that the Syrians of Malabar commemorate him every year in recognition of his virtues and righteousness.<sup>116</sup> So ended the life of this striving hero, the high-minded Mar Basilius Shukr Allah, who was plagued by adversities but never quit. He endured the hardships of life with contentment, fortitude, and wisdom, despite the fact that some of his endeavors were not successful. He went to his Lord with a bright face, having shown his talents. May God be gracious to him! Had we obtained more information about him, we would have adorned his biography with it. But we were able to find only the following sources, writing his biography after tremendous labor and patience. These sources are: (1) the account in Syriac of the journey of Maphryono Shukr Allah to Malabar from 1748 to 1751; (2) a tract in Arabic by the Chorepiscopus Jirjis Tunburchi of Aleppo about the journey of the maphryono and a description of the conditions of the Syrian church in Malabar, up to November, 1751; (3) four letters of the Patriarch Jirjis III, preserved at the Patriarchal Library. Three of these letters are in Syriac, and one in Garshuni (Arabic written in Syriac script) preserved in their original form, of which we have copies; (4) two letters of Gregorius, metropolitan of Niranam, and Metropolitan Eustathius Saliba, who was then a deacon, which they wrote in 1900; (5) two anonymous historical tracts in Syriac, the first written in 1820, and the second, more correct and precise, written shortly after 1838. Both brief tracts were written in Malabar; (6) two Syriac tracts, the first written by the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat in 1926, the second written by Timothy Awgen (Eugene), metropolitan of Kandanad, in 1932. Also, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas* by Philip the Syrian of Malabar (1902), and an English source by the priest Dr. Shapur Baba (1909). The fact that Maphroyono Shukr Allah's mother and uncles were still living in 1785, indicate that he, may God be gracious to him, did not live long and died before he was sixty years old.

As for the aforesaid Metropolitan Iyawannis Yuhanna of Mosul, he was the only bishop ordained by Maphryono Shukr Allah. He was a deacon and then a monk at the Za'faran Monastery. He was ordained a priest by Patriarch Shukr Allah on December 15, 1724. After he became a bishop in 1752 or 1753, he competently served the Malabar church. He assisted Mar Gregorius in the

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<sup>116</sup> *tr. note:* Philip, p. 160.

ordination of Metropolitan Dionysius (Tuma VI) of Malabar on May 29, 1770. He was a great help to Mar Gregorius in the administration of the church of Malabar until his death in 1794 (or, it is sometimes said, in 1798). He served forty years as a bishop and died at the age of ninety. He was buried at the Church of Chenganur. According to one source, he changed his name to Christophorus (Christ bearer).<sup>117</sup>

In his historical tract sent to his acquaintances in Aleppo, the Chorepiscopus Jirjis of Aleppo, already mentioned, said that some priests and deacons of Malabar related to him that Tuma of Malabar had an uncle, a chorepiscopus who styled himself a bishop. When he died, Tuma unduly assumed his office, carried his staff, and claimed to be a bishop. By virtue of his spurious office, he ordained deacons and priests by simony (ordination for money), charging each one he ordained ten to twenty rupees. He also lent money at usury. He could not even speak Syriac. Malabarian historical sources say that he remained disobedient (to the Apostolic See of Antioch) until he died in 1765, having unlawfully ordained one of his relatives a bishop. Realizing that his ordination was unlawful, the new bishop (Tuma VI) appealed to two Antiochian dignitaries, Gregorius of Khudayda, the Apostolic Delegate, and his deputy, Iyawannis Christophorus (Yuhanna of Mosul), to legitimize his ordination. They agreed and in 1770 re-ordained him a lawful bishop with the name of Dionysius I.<sup>118</sup>

The Chorepiscopus Jirjis further said that in every church there were from two to five priests and a like number of deacons. Only about fifteen priests could speak Syriac, but they were not interested in our Syriac rite. Teaching them the Syriac language was a very difficult task. Most of them despicably slandered each other. The Syrian population numbered about 12,242 households,<sup>119</sup> living in forty-seven towns and villages, and had forty-five churches. Most of them were extremely poor. The number of the rich among them was small except in the southern part of Malabar, where some wealthy people were found. Chorepiscopus Jirjis goes on to say that “the southern

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<sup>117</sup> *tr. note:* E. M. Philip says that he had a Syriac copy of the dairy of Maphryono Basilius Shukr Allah and the account of his journey to Malabar. He translated it into English and incoeporated it in his book with slight variations. See E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 157–159, note 8, and Mar Severus Yaqub Tum, *Tarikh al-Kanisa al-Suryaniyya al-Hindiyya*, 132–158.

<sup>118</sup> See the biography of Metropolitan Gregorius in (ch. 4).

<sup>119</sup> The total Syrian population there at that time was 61,210 souls if we assume an average of five people to one house, or 122,420 souls with an average of ten people to each house.

province has not yet subjected itself to us (the Syrian Church) in order to allow us to visit it and ascertain its conditions.” The fear of God, says Jirjis, was almost unknown in the countries he and the delegates visited.

### **Addition to the biography of Maphryono Shukr Allah**

It has been proved to us that he (Shukr Allah) was ordained a priest in 1740. We found this information at the Library of Oxford, MS 667, a small book written in a recent hand containing the Order of Matrimony and a short account of the affairs of Malabar (not very important), transcribed by a native of Malabar. It also contains a twelve-line ode in the Sarugite (twelve-syllabic) meter, composed in average language by the Chorepiscopus Jirjis of Aleppo, already mentioned, at Kandanad on August 9, 1751 (see p. 66). The ode is a panegyric in praise of the maphryono and an appeal to the Syrians of Malabar to adhere to him and benefit by his teaching. We also found at Cambridge Library in England MS L204, one of the precious manuscripts that Patriarch Jirjis III donated to the church of Malabar through the maphryono. Entitled *The Book of the Prophets*, this book is written in a good coarse western Estrangelo script. It is inscribed as follows: “This book was transcribed on January 4 by the lesser monk Basil, son of Shaykh Sa’id, known as the Maqdisi, at the Monastery of St. Barbara in the Mountain of Edessa in the year 1485 of the Greeks/1174 AD, in the time of Mar Mikha’il, patriarch of Antioch and Mar Athanasius, metropolitan of Edessa.” The patriarch here is the famous Michael Rabo (the Great, d. 1199) and the metropolitan is Athanasius Denha of Edessa, who was ordained a bishop in 1171 and died in 1191. This significant manuscript was donated by the Metropolitan Dionysius I Tuma of Malabar to the Englishman Dr. Buchanan (Claudius Buchanan, 1770–1808) in the year 1807, one year before his death.

### **NEW TEXTS OF THE ACCOUNT OF THE JOURNEY TO MALABAR OF MAPHRYONO BASILIUS SHUKR ALLAH AND THE CHOREPISCOPI JIRJIS TUNBURCHI OF ALEPPO**

The former account of the journey of Mapahryono Basilius Shukr Allah and of the Chorepiscopus Jirjis Tunburchi of Aleppo to Malabar (see above) is inadequate. The account of Chorepiscopus Jirjis, written in the colloquial Arabic of Aleppo and sent to some of his acquaintances in that city, was taken from a manuscript deficient at the beginning. It began with the arrival of Maphryono Shukr Allah and his companions in Cochín. Recently, we came upon a seventeen-page copy by Chorepiscopus Jirjis containing a more adequate information of the journey. It ends with the company’s arrival in Baghdad. This copy sheds more light on the journey up to that point.

We have also come upon a thirty-one page journal of small size written by Maphryono Shukr Allah. It contains his chronicle for one year, from October 1751 to September 16, 1752.

Since these two sources contain accounts written with great accuracy, and elucidate what we have said earlier, and they correct what we have quoted from other copies, which we acquired through translations of Malabarian writers, we have published both accounts below. We have corrected most of the linguistic and grammatical errors in both of them while keeping the original intact as much as possible. We have commented on both for the sake of elucidation and emendation of what has already been written.

### **The Tract of Chorepiscopus Jirjis**

In the Name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, we proceed to write the account of our journey from Aleppo and what happened to us.

We left Aleppo on Sunday afternoon, January 7 (1750). We were seen off by the deacon Ni'mat Allah Shidyah and his cousin Anton, the deacon Ni'mat Allah Jarwa, the deacon Anton al-Wakil, and a great number of priests, deacons and laity. We, the weak, the Maphryono Shukr Allah, son of the deacon Musa Qasabchi, the Chorepiscopus Jirjis, son of Chorepiscopus Ni'ma, and deacon Anton, son of the priest Sim'an, bade them farewell and entrusted them to God, the Benevolent. In our company were also three attendants: Deacon Musa, son of the sister of Bishop Tuma,<sup>120</sup> deacon Hidayah, nephew of Maqdisi Elias al-Azraq,<sup>121</sup> and Shamaya, an Indian Jew who hailed from India with Deacon Anton.

When those who had come to see us off left, we proceeded to a village called 'Assan.<sup>122</sup> The maphryono mounted a beast while we walked because beasts were not available. We arrived in the village at dinner time, very tired, and slept the night. We woke up in the morning and hired eight camels for the second time because the Bedouin, Salih, had not even one camel.<sup>123</sup> I, the weak

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<sup>120</sup> See above the biography of Tuma, Bishop of Damascus (d. 1750).

<sup>121</sup> The Malabarians changed the name of Shammas Hidayah to Addai.

<sup>122</sup> Yaqut al-Hamawi, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, 6:172, says that 'Assan is a village in the vicinity of Aleppo, about a farsakh (four miles) distant. Could he mean Ashin, a village near Aleppo? See Chorepiscopus Barsoum Ayyub, *Al-Usul al-Suryaniyya fi Asma' al-Mudun wa al-Qura al-Suryaniyya* (Dar Mardin, 2000), p. 237.

<sup>123</sup> In Chapter 13 of his tract, the Chorepiscopus Jirjis explains the reason camels were not available: "Rizq Allah and Gabriel Chalabi, sons of Jarwa, sold pieces of cloth to Salih al-Fukayli on credit. As they had no means of getting back their money, they deserted us in order to find another source of money. They arranged a deal with Salih

Chorepiscopus Jirjis, and our father the maphryono rode in litters, while the rest rode on camels.

Those from whom we hired the camels were four men: al-Hajj Ramla, Faris, Hasan, and another Faris. We traveled for a few days until the eighth day, when we camped near al-Sukhna<sup>124</sup> on Sunday, January 14. We remained for a day at al-Sukhna because a camel of Hajj Ibrahim ibn Waranka of Baghdad had died, and the merchandise it was carrying was left in the wilderness and had to be retrieved. This was done, and on Tuesday we proceeded to al-Tiba. Riding in camel litters caused us trouble, and we were forced to break them and toss them into the wilderness. We hired a work-horse for our father the maphryono, and I mounted the camel of the discarded litter. There were about twenty horses and mules in the caravan. On the desolate road we suffered from severe cold weather, which some Arabs said they had not seen before. From when we left Aleppo until we reached 'Ana, there was not even a drop of rain. But when we approached al-Tiba, snow fell early for almost half an hour.

We continued our journey for days, with no highway to follow. We entered a valley called al-Ratqa and went through it for three days. As we exited the valley on Sunday, January 28, it was a rather dark day because of the fear which gripped us three times. The first time was early in the morning, the second at noontime, and the third in the evening. Our calamity was great and even mingled with death.

Our first fear, in the morning, arose because leaders of the caravan wanted to camp at a water-well called al-Mani'i. In the early evening they decided to send two men to observe the place and find out whether its people were Arabs or otherwise. When the two men departed and approached the site, they saw smoke coming out of it and turned back. As they were returning, the caravan's leaders saw them far off and thought they were enemies. But the cavalry men in the caravan recognized them. So we had peace and continued the journey.

The reason of the second scare was the following: After moving on until noontime, the leaders of the caravan said that Arabs (Bedouins) had already descended upon the water well and they could not get to it. What should we

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al-Fukayli to hire camels for us and charged us 200 piasters. When we got to the village of 'Assan, the common saying, 'We have seen neither a camel nor camels,' truly applied to our condition. So we hired camels for the second time." This Rizq Allah is son of Mikha'il. Gabriel is the son of deacon Ni'mat Allah, son of Mikha'il Jarwa. The first Rizq Allah is the uncle of Metropolitan Mikha'il Jarwa; the second one, Gabriel, is his brother.

<sup>124</sup> Yaqut, 5:47, identifies it as a village in the Syrian desert between Tadmur (Palmyra), 'Urd, and Arak, whose people were Arabs.



do? The caravan's men said that the River Euphrates was nearby and we should camp at its bank. The river was about three days' distance. So, by God's guidance, we moved on. We had marched for hardly an hour when we met about twenty men who told us that they had been intercepted by Arabs. We wondered what to expect. Immediately, the cavalymen and the gunmen of the caravan rushed to the vanguard and found out that the men were small in number. They asked, "Who are you?" and they said, "We are of the Dulaym Arabs." "And what are you doing here?" they were further asked. They said, "We are shepherds tending the sheep of the Dulaym. We were surprised by Arabs of the 'Anaza tribe, who stole the sheep and drove us along with them. As we reached their residence, they took whatever we had and departed." Ironically, they went on to lament our condition, saying, "Allah has been gracious to you because we have come upon you. Listen to us and do not continue on this road. Come with us to our people, the Dulaym Arabs, and camp at the bank of the river (Euphrates). We shall prepare for you roasted sheep, yogurt, and butter. Spend the night in rest and leave in the early morning." The hapless men of our caravan—by the way, our caravan was small—who wanted to spend a sociable night, went along with them, while we moved on, saying, "May God rescue us from a third cause of fear." When we got close to the residence of their people (the Dulaym Arabs) the caravan's leaders said, "Let us camp here." They camped at a depression surrounded by low mounds.

One of the men whom we had met on the road hurried to tell the Dulaym Arabs that a small caravan had come from Aleppo with only a few armed men, and this was an opportune time to capture it. Hardly half an hour passed since we camped, when we were ferociously attacked by almost 200 horsemen and a great number of footmen. When the caravan's leaders saw they were being attacked, they raised their muskets and told the attacking horsemen to retreat or they would fire at them. When they did not retreat, the caravan's men fired, killing a horse of the Dulaym Arabs. The horsemen fled, but the footmen set up barricades to shelter us because we were positioned on low ground. They too had muskets with them. When the caravan's men saw that the footmen of the Dulaym Arabs had set up barricades, they too set up barricades from the cargo they had. Both sides began to fire. We sought protection, hiding behind the goods, and began to pray to God, weeping and crying, "O God, save us!" It seems that God's mercy watched over us. The shots passed over our heads like a rain shower for almost four hours until sunset,<sup>125</sup> and behold—a group of

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<sup>125</sup> We have said earlier that the men of the caravan and the Arabs (of the Dulaym) fired for about fifteen hours. Actually, the shooting lasted four to five hours.

horsemen approached us asking for peace. During the skirmish, two armed men of our caravan fell dead. They were Muhammad Hitawi (of Hit) and Hajj Muhammad Basrawi (of Basra). They were the men of Arutin Jarfali of Aleppo. A camel and few horses were also lost, and a man was hit in the shoulder but recovered. The Dulaym lost one man and a few horses. When the men came asking for peace, the firing stopped and we heaved a sigh of relief, but they went on to say, "Because you have killed one of our men and a few horses, you should pay us blood money. If you refuse, then prepare to fight." The caravan's leaders tried to come to terms with them. Only God knows how much we suffered that night. It was so cold that we could not pitch our tents or sleep until morning.

Let us return to our subject. In our company was an 'Anaza companion named Ibrahim who had advised the men of the caravan not to stay with the Dulaym Arabs, but they did not listen to him. When he saw what had happened, he said to the caravan's leaders, "Whatever happened has happened. Give me a horse to ride, and I will go to my cousin Fadil, the amir of the 'Anaza Arabs, and bring him to you to rescue you from these marauders." The caravan leaders provided him with a horse, which he mounted and left. His cousin was far away from our camp, about one-and-a-half days' journey. Ibrahim reached his cousin in the middle of the night and brought him back to us at sunrise. When the Dulaym Arabs saw him, they began to flee into crevices in the ground. The 'Anaza Arabs fell upon the Arabs of the Dulaym and beat them. At the same time, the men of our caravan captured two men of the Dulaym Arabs, tied them up, and demanded that they hand back whatever they looted. Evidently, they had stolen merchandise overnight worth a thousand piasters.

Meanwhile, the accursed Wandal, shaykh of the Shammar Arabs, who was staying with the Arabs of Dulaym and had instigated them against us, came and implored Fadil of 'Anaza to release the two men. The caravan leaders yielded and released them. Even if they had not released them, however, they would have given back everything their people had taken at night. Presently, Fadil asked us to load our beasts; we did so and moved on. Twenty horsemen of the 'Anaza Arabs accompanied us until we came to a house, where we spent the night. Early in the morning of Monday, January 29, we were again on our way. Before we set out, however, Fadil of 'Anaza demanded from us ten Venetian gold coins for each of our loads. The men of the caravan counted sixty loads and bargained to pay him only nine gold coins for each load. They guaranteed the amount they promised. As a security they gave him two loads of broadcloth

and a load of paper, together with the camels that were carrying them. They were to get the loads back upon payment of the total amount.<sup>126</sup> This Fadil was the one who looted the 'Afrawi's caravan. Be that as it may, Fadil departed, and the Arabs of Shammar accompanied us to 'Ana.<sup>127</sup> Surely, if God had not sent us Fadil of 'Anaza, the Dulaym Arabs would have robbed us and taken our clothes and belongings. They would even have killed us because of the blood that was shed on both sides. Even if they had not slaughtered us, they at least they would have left us naked to die from cold. Only God knows what would have happened to us. Thank God for our safety.

We entered 'Ana at sunset on Thursday, February 1, the twenty-sixth day since we had left Aleppo. We lodged at the house of a Muslim for two days. 'Ana is situated on the bank of the River Euphrates and stretches for three hours' journey. After two days we left and lodged at the house of a Jew in the eastern part of 'Ana, which we rented for four *shahis*<sup>128</sup> a day. Prices were high in 'Ana, and two piasters a day was not enough for our keep. We observed the Fast of Nineveh and then prepared to fast for Lent, which followed a little more than two weeks later.<sup>129</sup> At 'Ana, we received a report that Ta'aan, the shaykh of the Arabs of Shadid, had attacked the Dulaym Arabs and killed

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<sup>126</sup> We have said above in describing the journey of the maphryono that the captain of the robbers received from the men of the caravan 9,000 gold coins. Later, however, we discovered that this number was an error by the copyists or the translators of the Syriac or the English text, who added a zero, so that 900 became 9,000.

<sup>127</sup> Yaqut, 6:101, says that according to Kulaibi, the villages of 'Anat were called so after the names of three brothers of the people of 'Aad who had fled and taken up residence in these isles. But the Arabs called them 'Aanat, meaning a herd of deer. 'Ana is a famous town situated between al-Raqqah and Hit in the province of the Jazira. It overlooks the River Euphrates near the Nura garden. It has a formidable fortress. Qa'im bi Amr Allah was taken to it when the Basasiri intended to kill him, but his murder was prevented by Maharish. Tughrul Beg then came and killed the Basasiri and restored the caliph to Baghdad. The caliph was absent from Baghdad for one year. Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Hamadani said that Hit and 'Anat belonged to the province of Anbar. When Anusherwan reigned, he learned that bands of Arabs had been raiding the region close to the Sawad (in southern Iraq) up to the Badiya (desert). He ordered the rebuilding of the walls of a town called Alus, which Sapur Dhu al-Aktaf ("he of the shoulders") had built and fortified with armament to protect the region.

<sup>128</sup> One shahi was equivalent almost to half a golden lira.

<sup>129</sup> The Fast of Nineveh occurs on February 5, and Lent begins on the 26th of the same month.

fourteen of them. He robbed them and took others captive. He left them nothing. How true in this case is the proverb, "The iniquitous will be afflicted by one more iniquitous than himself."

Conflict arose between the people of 'Ana and the Arabs of Shammar, who robbed some of them and captured 130 donkeys and a few cows, but killed only one man. Those who fled were safe. At 'Ana we were also shaken with fear of the Arabs. After we had waited forty days at 'Ana, the pasha's deputy came and advised us to journey to Baghdad. But we (the maphryono and his companions) did not want to go to Baghdad. So the caravan departed and we remained in the town. Our delay was because the water level of the Euphrates was low. Between 'Ana and Hit, water wheels with locks stretched over both banks of the river. If the river did not flood, riverboats were unable to navigate. The travelers in the caravan were forced to leave, however, and we remained behind for fifteen days. All told, we stayed in 'Ana for fifty-seven days.

On Thursday, March 29, we embarked on a riverboat whose captain was called 'Abd Allah. We arrived at a village called Hubbayn where we anchored for three hours. We moved on to another village called al-Zawiya on the Euphrates bank, where we spent the night. On Friday, March 30, we moved to a populated isle in the middle of the river called al-Haditha, and on Saturday, March 31, we passed by a populated isle called Alus.<sup>130</sup> Near this isle was a tributary of the Euphrates called Haqlan, as big as the Aleppo River and full of fish. The people of the area told us that fish navigate from the salty sea near Basra through al-Bira to this place. They also told us that some people of Basra caught a big fish and, having wrapped it in the middle, released it in the Euphrates. They came to this place (Haqlan) to see whether someone had caught it.

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<sup>130</sup> Hubbayn, today called Habbin, is on the eastern bank of the Euphrates. Yaqut did not mention it, nor did he mention al-Zawiya, which probably is known today as Zabda. Yaqut, 3:235, says that al-Haditha, now known as Hadithat al-Nura, is a few miles from Anbar. It has a strong citadel in the middle of the Euphrates surrounded by water. It was built by Abu Midlaj al-Tamimi in the time of the governor of Kufa, 'Uthman ibn Yasir, during the reign of the Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (634–644). Alus is a town situated on the Euphrates bank near 'Aana and al-Haditha (Yaqut, 1:326).

We spent Sunday night at an isle called Jubba,<sup>131</sup> situated in the middle of the Euphrates. It was hemmed in with palm trees. On Sunday, April 1, we moved on to Hit, where we spent the night. The next day, we left Hit and spent Tuesday on the bank of the Euphrates opposite a ruined place called Mushayhid. We departed on Tuesday and spent the night at a place called al-Miqdam,<sup>132</sup> where the boats usually leave for Baghdad. Miqdam is one day distant from Baghdad. As we left on Wednesday, April 4, an easterly wind blew up, and we began to tie down the boat as we moved from one island toward another. The islands were not populated, and boats could not navigate against the eastern wind. So we spent the night at the isle in the middle of the river. On Thursday, March 5, we reached a village called Musayyab (on the Euphrates bank). Two hours later came a boat loaded with salt, but the sailors could not moor it to the bank because the water level was too high. At this village there was a bridge stretching on floating boats like the bridge of Baghdad. When the ship reached the bridge, it collided with it, broke up, and sank. When we saw what had happened, our hearts trembled with fear (like that of a pigeon). At this village, those in charge collected a month's surety of one purse (500 piasters) from boats and from ingoing and outgoing caravans. We spent that night at Musayyab. On a Friday in Lent, April 6, we left and touched upon a village called Nasiriyya<sup>133</sup> and went from there to Hilla about noontime.<sup>134</sup>

At Hilla we met Deacon Zachariah,<sup>135</sup> the attendant of Metropolitan Yuhanna (Gregorius Yuhanna of Khudayda, or Qaraqosh), whom the metropolitan had dispatched to take us to Baghdad because the road from Hilla to Basra was controlled by the Muntafik Arabs and no one could travel by it.

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<sup>131</sup> Yaqt, 3:42, says Jubba is a village near Hit. From it came Abu 'Abd Allah ibn Jamil, who composed excellent poetry and served at Diwaniyya in different capacities. He died in 616 AH/1218 AD.

<sup>132</sup> Today called Khan Miqdam.

<sup>133</sup> Today a large city.

<sup>134</sup> This is the Hilla of the Banu Mazyad, built by Sayf al-Dawla Sadaqa ibn Mansur ibn Mazyad al-Asadi. It is situated west of the Euphrates; Sadaqa had moved there in the month of Muharram, 495 AH/1101 AD. It was a thicket where lions sought shelter. Sadaqa arrived in it with his family and soldiers and erected magnificent houses and buildings, which his own men imitated. Thus, Hilla became the greatest of Iraq's towns. It is situated between Kufa and Baghdad.

<sup>135</sup> We said earlier that the deacons Hidayat Allah and Musa went to Baghdad ahead of the maphryono. More correctly, it should be said in this context that the two deacons were attendants of the maphryono and traveled with him.

On the day of our arrival in Hilla, however, some boats departed and then returned. So we stayed in the caravansary of Hajj Yusuf, where Deacon 'Ata Allah, the brother of the Chorepiscopus 'Abd al-'Azim of Diyarbakr, was also staying.<sup>136</sup> On Palm Sunday, April 8, our father the maphryono said the Mass in the room. The ceremony was attended by Chaldeans and Armenians and some of our own people who were in Hilla. I, the poor one, recognized some of the people who belonged to these three denominations and offered them the mysteries (Holy Communion).

On Monday of Passion Week, we left Hilla on donkeys' backs. In the evening we rested at Khan al-Mahawil. On Tuesday we departed for a khan called Bi'r al-Nuss, and then to another khan called Azad, where we spent the night. On Wednesday morning we left and arrived in Baghdad at high noon. We met Rabban Hanna, the deacon Yaqub of Edessa, and the attendant of Sulayman Pasha,<sup>137</sup> who came to meet us. They received us with utmost honor and went to inform Metropolitan Yuhanna of our arrival. We met the metropolitan at the entrance to the bridge, and accompanied him and those who received us to a house which they had rented and furnished two or three days earlier. We changed our clothes and rested at the house that night. On Thursday morning, I, the poor, celebrated the Mass in the house of Khawaja Yusuf Tarzi Bashi (Chief Tailor). Yusuf was a Greek (Byzantine or Rum Orthodox) but very affectionate. May God protect him and protect every loving person. He is the brother-in-law of Ni'mat Allah, son of Shukri Chalabi Shatma, who had married a native woman of Baghdad.

On the Saturday of Light,<sup>138</sup> Metropolitan Yuhanna celebrated the Mass, and on Easter Day, April 15, our father the maphryono said the Mass at the Armenian Church. We were received with utmost hospitality and honor. The Vartabet (priest) of the Armenian Church, Vartnis, was a loving man. After the service we took breakfast with him. On Easter Day, we were visited by some people from our denomination (Syrians) and by Armenians who offered their felicitation on the Easter Feast. But Padre Emmanuel did not come to see

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<sup>136</sup> We have not found this chorepiscopus listed among the chorepiscopoi or priests of Diyarbakr, who then numbered twelve.

<sup>137</sup> He is Sulayman Pasha of Tiflis, who became governor of Baghdad in 1749 after being a servant to its Wali (governor) Ahmad Pasha since 1736. He was elected to the office of deputy of the pasha. Peace prevailed under his rule, which ended in 1761.

<sup>138</sup> *tr. note:* The Saturday following Good Friday, so called because it is believed that divine light springs out of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

us.<sup>139</sup> As to deacon Yaqub of Edessa, attendant to Sulayman Pasha (may God bless him), he was ready to provide us with anything we needed. On New Sunday, I, the poor, celebrated the Mass at the home of Khawaja Yusuf Tarzi Bashi, and on the evening of the festival of Mar Jirjis (St. George), heavy rain fell in Baghdad for two hours.

### **The Tract of Maphryono Shukr Allah**

An account of the events which happened from October 2063 of the Greeks to October 2064 of the Greeks/1751–1752 AD.

After Metropolitan Yuhanna departed on the company's ship, we first calculated the debt he had incurred as follows: 2000 rupees owed the company spent by Deacon Anton. We also paid 87 rupees, the difference between the said amount and that owed to the money changer in Basra. We found that the metropolitan owed 150 rupees to the company for the cost of the provisions needed on the journey and food which he used at the citadel, 400 rupees to Musa the Jew, 160 rupees to Elikeh, son of Ezekiel, and 100 rupees to David the Jew. The whole amount of the debt incurred by the metropolitan totaled 2897 rupees. This debt was on our back (demanded from us) because we had to assure the creditors of paying it in full. As to the total number of the objects he (the metropolitan) had under his control, they were recorded by the company after his departure in a ledger which I sent to him. They included chairs, furnishings, a staff, and a church vestment worth 300 rupees. Only the amount of 2597 rupees was left for us to pay.

On October 15, we accompanied our group from Kandanad to Kothamangalam to meet with Tuma, in order to reach an agreement with him. We entered the town and sent ten men to ask him to come to us with love, but he excused himself, saying that he was afraid of the governors. We sent the men once more and assured him of the governors' guarantee of safety. He said that he would come eight days later. These days passed, and he did not show up. We sent the men for the third time, and he said that he would come on the second day of December. When the day drew near, the faithful brought him to us with great honor. We even ordered the church bell rung, thinking that he would come to meet us at the Church of the Virgin, where we were staying. But he did not come to this church and went to lodge at a small church where Maphryono Yalda was buried. Two hours later, we dispatched Rabban Hanna, accompanied by the deacons, who greeted him and told him to meet with the

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<sup>139</sup> He is Emmanuel Payeh (*sic*), the Carmelite who was sent to Baghdad in 1728, became a bishop in 1742, and left Baghdad in 1752.

maphryono. He said that he was tired and could not come. Three days later we sent to him his own priests—one of whom, Yusuf, was wicked and malicious—and the priest Peter with other priests and laymen. Priest Yusuf remonstrated with us in an affectionate manner, but we said to him, “Mar Ignatius (the Patriarch of Antioch) has already sent letters to Tuma. Is it appropriate that he declined to meet with us or show us his face although we dispatched several men to plead with him? Yusuf answered, “The metropolitan who has departed left us no trust or faith. Now, Tuma sent us asking to see the *systaticon* (document of election) which you have in your possession, in order that we may know whether you are truly Syrian fathers or not.” Priest Butrus (Peter) said, “I am a believer and have sinned against heaven and against you. We request you, however, to read the *systaticon*.” I said to them, “Let us go down to the church, and there you can read the *systaticon* because many people want to hear it.” The *systaticon* was read at the church, and an interpreter translated it into their language. We imparted to them spiritual words and said that from now on there should be no communication conducive to discord. They departed in peace and informed Tuma of our conversation. On the next day Tuma went down to the church and gathered the congregation. He began to talk willfully against us, saying that he would never comply with anything we said. The people, who feared him, could not answer back because for twenty-four years, he had been their head, supported by the government’s power.

On the next day the priests came back and said to us, “Tuma asks why you place a piece of metal at the end of your pastoral staff; why, when you celebrate weddings, you have the bride stand to the right of the bridegroom; why you hand the best man (Ishbin) a sword;<sup>140</sup> why you draw a curtain at the altar;<sup>141</sup> and why you say in the Nicene Creed, ‘He rose on the third day as he willed’ (instead of ‘according to the Scriptures’). The Fathers never taught us these six customs.”<sup>142</sup>

We said to them, “The fathers who came to you were like a physician who calls on the wounded patient. First he treats the wound to prevent more serious illness. When the deadly wound is cured, then he goes on to treat the scratches. When the fathers saw that you had lost the way, they treated you as they could and strongly eliminated some of your bad customs. They had your priests grow long beards, handed them the faith, and taught them the seasons

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<sup>140</sup> We know nothing about this custom, which is not in our tradition. Perhaps it was used in those days by some people.

<sup>141</sup> Drawing the veil or curtain of the altar is a custom still used in the churches of Mardin, Mosul, and Amid.

<sup>142</sup> In the original text these traditions numbered five, not six.



of fasting and times of prayers, as much as they could. Now Tuma is our spiritual son. Let him come to us, and we will reach a concord with him concerning these customs. Our main purpose is to treat the more sinister wounds and overlook what does not lead to death." The priest returned to Tuma and told him what we had said, but he was not convinced. He said, "I want the maphryono to write to me whether these customs are those of the Syrians. I will keep his written answer for thirty days, and then I will come to see him and make peace with him."

The priests argued, saying "The maphryono has explained to us all these things and confirmed them. He also said if Tuma would come to see him, he would reach an agreement with him on all these matters." Tuma was still not convinced. He sent to us some of the faithful, asking us to put down in writing whether these customs were those of the Syrians. We provided him with a copy of these customs and their explanation. We said, "Come to us and try to reach an agreement with us, and everything will be done in love according to your own liking." He did not answer. We waited patiently until the thirty days passed, during which the people shuttled between us and him, imploring him to meet with us. At times, he said he would come to meet with us at night; at other times, however, he said he would come after a period of time. We gathered the congregation and said to them, "We have been staying here a long time while Tuma refused to show up. Let us go to other churches to see which of them has accepted us, in order to teach them the faith". Again, the people went to Tuma and insisted that he see the maphryono. He said he would come to meet with the fathers on February 15. The people asked us to remain until that day. We did. On February 15 the people congregated at a church which belonged to Tuma. On February 16, they presented themselves to us, saying that Tuma wanted us to go to St. Thomas Church, where he would be present. He will not kiss your hand, they added, until he has discussed everything with you and submitted to you. We said that it was almost evening, and he wanted to show up and engage us in a long discussion. What harmony could be reached at night? They answered that no harmony could be reached at night. We said to them, "Let him write down just three words indicating that he is coming to meet with us and reach an agreement with us. Hasten to the church, and we will join you." They left to discuss the matter. They returned at four o'clock at night, saying, "He will not write down anything. We suggest that you too should come to the church." We said to them, "It is night, and we cannot go to the church in the dark. Wait here until the morning." They left.

When Tuma heard that we had told the people to wait until the morning, before dawn he ordered the congregation of the two churches who supported him to leave. We got up in the morning and went to the Church of St. Thomas to conduct the morning service, thinking that he would be present. But he did

not show up. We returned to the Church of the Virgin, where we had lodged first, and told the congregation that we were leaving. They said we should inform the king (the raja) and the Dutch Commodore of our departure. We complied. The commodore was newly appointed and had no knowledge of matters between the maphryono and Tuma. But the people informed him of them. The commodore addressed a letter to us and to Tuma. The raja also wrote to us. He and the commodore said that they wanted definitely to see us make peace.

We delivered the letters to Tuma and waited three days for an answer, but received none. We called the elders and spoke to them with great affection. We implored them to ask Tuma to make peace with us, as we had been commanded by the rulers. Tuma answered, "I have already sent letters to the raja and am waiting for a reply." We waited three more days but he did not respond. We sent him priests, to whom he said, "I cannot make peace right now but may do that later." We wrote once more to the king and the commodore, who became furious with Tuma. But Tuma immediately approached them and won their consent. He wrote to them, "There is no conflict between me and the maphryono. In fact, I have not heard one single bad word from him. But I want to draw near Cochin to effect peace." The raja and the commodore sent a message asking us to come to Kandanad, and said they would also summon Tuma to find where he stood. We went to Kandanad on Friday of Palm Week. After we left, however, Tuma went on Palm Sunday to the great church where we were staying, pulled out the step of the altar, and tore up its veil. Indeed, during our stay at that church we exerted great effort in talking with the priests until they became convinced to put on the vestments that Metropolitan 'Abd al-Jalil and Maphrian Yalda had brought with them. After we left, Tuma called the priests and rebuked them for obeying us. Some of them succumbed to him, while others remained resolute. The congregation, however, did not appreciate what Tuma had done, and no one prayed with him. When he left the church, the priests restored the step of the altar to its former place, fixed the altar's veil, and informed us of their action. We wrote advising them that none of them should provoke trouble, because Tuma was seeking a conflict and we had not come to their land to engage in conflict.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Tuma, the false leader, was not satisfied with adhering to falsehood, maliciousness, calumny, and impudence; apart from his violation of religion and church laws, he even went a step further, arguing with the meek and patient maphryono about some church customs and traditions, most of which were trivial and unworthy of discussion. But it was evidence of his bad intentions and malice.

On Maunday Thursday, we ordained priests and a deacon, and on the next day of Easter we ordained Rabban Hanna a bishop (April 30, 1752). On Thursday, we went to meet with the new commodore. He said, "I have a letter indicating that these people (the Syrians of Malabar) always antagonized the fathers who came from Antioch." We (the maphryono) said to him, "We have no intention of picking a fight with anyone. You are the governor who should judge justly. Tuma is the one who wrote (to the patriarch) and brought me (to Malabar) in order to confirm him as a metropolitan. Now he says that he is head of the church and needs no confirmation." The commodore said, "Be of good cheer, everything will be according to your wish." We went to see the king, who also said, "Be of good cheer." So, we returned to Kandanad and left Metropolitan Yuhanna behind in Cochin because he had fallen ill. He received treatment for fifteen days and recovered, and we brought him to Kandanad. Meanwhile, we traveled to Mattancheri to collect church dues in order to pay our debt. While we were there, the king sent us a message, saying, "I want you to go to Pallikari and remain there to take care of its people, or send a bishop instead of you." We said, "We cannot leave now. But we sent Bishop Yuhanna to that town. After all, the people of Pallikari were of weak faith, and Tuma had his center established in it. He always instigated them against Yuhanna and made trouble for him. Indeed, Bishop Yuhanna wanted to leave their town, but we wrote him to treat the people with love until we learned what the result would be. Furthermore, the king ordered us to send a bishop to them." We remained in Mattancheri for a month but could collect only a small amount of money because their church had suffered heavy debt because Metropolitan Iyawannis of Amid had stayed with them and they were burdened with his expenses. Since then, the rulers had overwhelmed them, they claimed. Realizing that they were of no use to us, we went to a church called Pakhoor (*si*), named after St. Thomas. It was in ruins, and its parishioners were poor. We spent two days there and then left for Paruni, which was divided between the Syrians and the Franks (Latins). The governor of this town was not the raja of Cochin. Our Syrian parishioners came to us, saying, "We are afraid of Tuma and the Franks. Write to the governor that you are staying in the town with his knowledge." We wrote to the governor that we wanted to stay in his land for a few days. He wrote back, "Welcome, you may stay." He also wrote to a lesser governor in that region under his control that he should visit us and take us to the church at Mallikullam, which was under his domain. This church, too, was divided between the Syrians and the Franks. We stayed fifteen days in Paruni. The congregation of this town love only by their lips, but were scared of Tuma, who might do them harm.

On the fifteenth day the Syrians of Mallikullam came, by order of the governor, and took us to their town. But a wicked Frankish priest instigated

some Franks against us. Others, however, were not pleased with him. This priest said, "Either I get killed or I kill the maphryono and destroy the church building." When we arrived in the town, his followers stood at the entrance of the church, swearing by the head of the king (the *raja*), and begging our people not to enter the church. Our people said to them, "We have come by order of the king (*raja*)," pushed them aside, and entered the church. As they got inside, the Latin priest and his group took hold of the *Bema*<sup>144</sup> and said, "We will never let the maphryono ascend the *Bema*." When we saw this, we told the lesser governor who had come with us, "We will not fight anyone. If you do not want us to abide by the governor's (*raja*'s) orders, however, we will retreat." The lesser governor said, "I have an order to bring you here. Now, neither you nor they should get to the *Bema* until I have discussed the matter with the governor." So we remained at the church, with fifty men guarding us day and night.

That wicked Latin priest was a drunkard, notorious for his objectionable deeds. His supporters shuttled back and forth to see the governor, bringing along false reports which reveal the corruption of the government. What kind of a government would these men, who had no fear of God, have? There were four or five governors in the village, each of whom was under the authority of a higher governor. But none of them took heed of the others. Finally, we stayed there for fifteen days under guard while the governor prevaricated, hoping to receive bribes from both sides. When we realized that there was no use because Tuma kept writing to the governor and to the congregation not to receive us or allow the priest to follow the traditions of our church, we left for Kandanat. We sent a message to the commodore informing him of the situation. He replied, "I have sent a letter to the king of the south, and when I receive an answer I will let you know of its contents." We kept waiting, but the commodore's reply was delayed. Meanwhile, he asked us to go to Parur, where Metropolitan Mar Gregorius 'Abd al-Jalil had died. Their king asked us to visit him, but for only two days. After much pleading, he agreed that we could stay for ten days. But the congregation disagreed, saying, "Let him (the maphryono) stay as long as he wishes." Their king, however, was not pleased because the Franks scared him and said, "If the maphryono comes here, you will not be able to govern. Moreover, he is demanding the money of Mar Gregorius."<sup>145</sup> So

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<sup>144</sup> *tr. note:* The *Bema* is the part of the church containing the altar where the Bishop's Throne is placed.

<sup>145</sup> Mar Gregorius 'Abd al-Jalil of Mosul, metropolitan of Jerusalem, was dispatched to Malabar in 1665 and administered the church there with great apostolic zeal. He passed away in 1671.

we went to stay at Mulanthuruthi, where Bishop Hidaya had died. The parishioners of this town were poor and had squandered the bishop's money because of enmity with each other. We could hardly receive a thing from them except food.<sup>146</sup>

Twelve years before Tuma's death, a Nestorian bishop called Gabriel arrived in Malabar<sup>147</sup> and began to quarrel intensely with Tuma, telling him, "You should kiss my hand because you are not a bishop." The priests agreed with him and kept reminding Tuma that he was not a lawful bishop. After much conflict the two separated, and Gabriel went to stay in the southern part (of Malabar), while Tuma remained at Kandanad. Meanwhile, Tuma ordained a priest and, as it happened, became gravely ill in Mulanthuruthi. The congregations of thirteen churches met and moved him to Kandanad. They deliberated the situation and discovered that Gabriel was a Nestorian who had altered some church customs. They also discovered that he was trying cunningly to plant among them the seeds of the Nestorian faith. For this reason they decided to install a new leader. They had the monk Tuma, nephew of the unlawful Bishop Tuma, whom Gabriel had vested with the monastic habit. He seemed to have been behaving properly. When they met to select a leader, some of them chose the monk Tuma, while others chose Tuma (the unlawful and rebellious bishop), who was suffering from severe illness. They said to Tuma, "Arise. Let us convey you to the church. Your nephew, the monk Tuma, will celebrate the Mass, and you will lay your hands on him." He said to them, "That is not right. Then the people will say that a monk has

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<sup>146</sup> Here the maphryono mentions the reports of the native elders of Mulanthuruthi about the conversion of the people of Malabar to Christianity and their procrastination until the arrival of Metropolitan 'Abd al-Jalil, Maphryono Yalda and Bishop Hidaya in Malabar. [*tr. note*: Both Maphryono Basilius Yalda and Bishop Iyawannis Hidayat Allah were from Ba Khudayda (Qaraqosh), near Mosul. They were among the best of our church fathers of their time. Basilius Yalda died in 1685 and Hidaya in 1693. They left a good memory in Malabar.] The maphryono (Yalda) ordained for them a bishop and a chorepiscopus named Tuma, who came from a family that had held clerical positions by heredity for a long time. But since the veracity of the accounts of the native elders cannot stand up under criticism, we overlooked their publication and satisfied ourselves with reporting the events that are connected with the biography of the rebellious (and unlawful bishop) Tuma in the following paragraph.

<sup>147</sup> Gabriel was a Nestorian bishop of Azerbaijan. Some say he was of Persian origin. Others say he was from Nineveh (Mosul). He went to Malabar in 1709.

ordained him (a bishop)."<sup>148</sup> As he uttered these words he fell into a coma. When he regained consciousness, the priests brought him the book (office of ordination). He sat upright in the chair while the monk was reading (the service of ordination) to him. But Tuma lapsed into a coma again. Instantly, one of the priests placed the miter on the head of monk Tuma.<sup>149</sup> Two hours later he breathed his last. Meanwhile, their learned priests arrived, one of whom was named Abraham. The monk Tuma said to them, "I want to write letters to the churches (about his ordination), but how should I sign?" They said, "Sign your name as the Chorepiscopus." But since they had no idea what a Chorepiscopus is, they began to argue with one another. Many of them refused to kiss his hand.<sup>150</sup> So he appealed to the king (the raja), who brought soldiers who forced them to kiss his hand.

Meanwhile, the Nestorian Gabriel sent a message to monk Tuma to come to him in order to be ordained (a lawful bishop), but he refused. Some time later, Gabriel fell sick. When the monk Tuma heard that he was sick, he went to see him. While Tuma was on his way, Gabriel died at Kottayam. At his side was the priest Matta, the teacher. Now that Gabriel was dead, Matta, fearing Tuma, forged a letter, presumably written by Gabriel, stating that he had bestowed the office of the episcopate on monk Tuma and placed it in Gabriel's hand. He handed it to the monk Tuma, saying that he had found it in Gabriel's hand. Tuma said that he needed no confirmation (as a bishop), declaring, "I have been confirmed by two bishops who have passed away."<sup>151</sup>

In May, 1752, Tuma had the audacity to ordain his sister's grandson a deacon to succeed him. Along with him he ordained two more deacons. One of them, named Tuma, from the southern region, had already been ordained by Metropolitan Iyawannis Yuhanna. Apparently, the first one offered (Tuma) a bribe and schemed with him to ordain him a deacon; the other gave him fifty rupees as a bribe. But the majority of the people did not accept this action (of simony, i.e., selling church offices for money). On July 1 the king sent two heathen men to warn Tuma to quit making trouble. But he bribed them and promised that on the twenty-fifth he would make peace (with the maphryono). When they delivered his answer to us, we said that we would gratefully accept whatever the king ordered.

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<sup>148</sup> *tr. note:* This response shows that the rebellious Tuma did not consider himself a lawful bishop.

<sup>149</sup> *tr. note:* To show that his uncle, the rebellious and unlawful Bishop Tuma, had ordained him a bishop.

<sup>150</sup> *tr. note:* To show respect for the position of bishop.

<sup>151</sup> Here ends the story of the elders of Mullantory.

We wish to say how crooked the government in this country was. We have been told that there were numerous kings (rulers) in Malabar. In only one province, lying a distance of three days to the east, there were seventeen kings and governors. If this was their condition, then what kind of government would theirs be? As for the officials of the (Dutch) Company, they were not the rulers of the country and had no authority except over the citadel. But they had a prestigious position with the kings, some of whom feared them while others disregarded them.

The date on which Tuma promised to meet with us passed and he did not appear. So on August 3, the date of the commemoration of Bishop Hidaya at Mulanthuruthi, we sent a message to Metropolitan Yuhanna and Bishop Yuhanna to come to us. We vested the priest Gurgis with the monastic habit. This priest was a native of Mulanthuruthi and of noble descent. Like us, he had learned how to say the prayers of the religious duties (that is, the prayers chanted antiphonally by two church choirs of priests and deacons.) We found him to be qualified for the priesthood. We had hopes that, by the intercession of the Virgin, he would continue to be of virtuous conduct. May the Lord bring forth good fruit from him!

We returned to Kandanad and sent for the Syrians of Parur, where Metropolitan ‘Abd al-Jalil had died. We asked them to hand over the metropolitan’s money. They gave us some of it and said that the rest had been squandered. We asked them to hand us what was available and they said that they would do so when I (the maphryono) visited them. We wanted to pay them a visit, but the Franks (Latin clerics) instigated the king, who refused to let us go. He sent us a message saying that he would leave information for me when I decided to pay the people of Parur a visit. With this, we forgot about this matter for the time being and waited for the Lord’s disposal.

On September 20, the commemoration of Maphryono Yalda, we dispatched the metropolitan (Gregorius Yuhanna) to Kothamangalam to celebrate the commemoration of the maphryono because he was his relative and should stay with them for a while. On September 27, the Deputy Commodore of Cochin passed away. Meanwhile, we sent Bishop Yuhanna to Cochin for treatment because he had become sick from staying too long in Pallikari. As for Deacon Anton, he made an agreement with some acquaintances who had provided him with merchandise (perfumes worth 500 rupees) to take it to Basra and then return to Malabar. He collected a sum of rupees and left for Basra with the intention of bringing his family back to India.

On October 15 of the year 2064 of the Greeks/1752 AD, I, the poor, left Kandanad and went to the south. The next day I arrived in Kottayam, which the deceased Nestorian Gabriel had made a center of his activity. The congregation received us with alacrity, but their priests were like crafty foxes.

May God help us against them. We left the bishop behind in Kandanad in our stead and left the metropolitan in Kothamangalam. Kottayam is the first city in the southern province, where we have fourteen churches. Some of the parishioners came to see us, but others did not. Most of its people are rough and extremely tight-fisted. We asked God to direct us through this impasse, saying, "We have nothing to offer you except our supplication. Stay in peace."<sup>152</sup>

#### 4- SEVERUS YUHANNA, METROPOLITAN OF MALABAR AND THEN OF GARGAR (1749–1768)

Severus Yuhanna was a native of Gargar (or Hisn Mansur, some say). He became a monk at the Za'faran Monastery and, after receiving religious education, was ordained a priest in 1742. For some time he was engaged in the transcription of Syriac books. There is an Order of Baptism at the church of the village of Awius in his handwriting, finished in 1747. At the village of Swayarik there is also a copy of the Gospels in Syriac, which he transcribed for the church of the village of Wank in 1750.

Severus Yuhanna was ordained a bishop by Patriarch Jirjis III at the church of Amid in the middle of 1749. The patriarch sent him to Malabar with Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna of Khudayda (Qaraqosh) and the Chorepiscopus 'Abd al-Nur, son of Khawaja Aslan of Amid. (Chorepiscopus 'Abd al-Nur donated service books and *busoyos* to our Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem. He was still living in 1760.) Upon arriving in Baghdad he remained in that city for a few months awaiting the arrival of Maphryono Shukr Allah. But he fell ill and returned to Amid with the chorepiscopus. Thus he never reached Malabar. He may have become the bishop of the diocese of Hattack. We found some ordinations done by him in the years 1752 and 1754 for the Churches of Qawm and Malaha of the same diocese. When the diocese of

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<sup>152</sup> *tr. note:* I have in my possession a letter dated August 27, 2063 of the Greeks/1752 AD, from Patriarch Jirjis III addressed to Maphryono Shukr Allah and Metropolitan Yuhanna in Cochin, in answer to the maphryono's letter to the patriarch, dated December 16, 1751. It was originally written in Garshuni (Arabic in Syriac script), but was copied in Arabic script by the late Patriarch Aphram I Barsoum, most likely in 1909 when he was a monk at the Za'faran Monastery. The letter is part of a scrapbook containing miscellaneous items concerning the Syrian Church compiled by Barsoum. In his letter, the Patriarch Jirjis III says that he received a letter from Deacon Ni'mat Allah Shidyaq informing him of the sickness of the Chorepiscopus Jirjis and his recovery at Basra. He goes on to encourage the maphryono and his companions to be patient in face of the oppression and antagonism of the wicked Tuma.



Gargar, which was then attached to Kharput and Hisn Mansur, became vacant after the transfer of Metropolitan Tuma of Qutrubul to Edessa in 1758, the patriarch designated him a bishop of Gargar. He resided at Gargar until his death in the middle of 1768. He served the episcopate for nineteen years and was succeeded by Metropolitan Gregorius Anton of Edessa.

### **5- CYRIL RIZQ ALLAH, BISHOP OF THE PATRIARCHAL OFFICE AND THEN OF MOSUL (1749–1772)**

Cyril Rizq Allah was the son of the Chorepiscopus Matta, son of the priest Rizq Allah, son of ‘Abd al-Karim Sa’ur (sextant) of Mosul of the noble family of Patriarch Jirjis II, of blessed memory. His father, the Chorepiscopus Matta, was a priest of the Church of St. Thomas in Mosul and was still living in 1705.

Cyril Rizq Allah was born in Mosul in 1699 (as he himself said in the Jerusalem MSS). He studied church sciences under the priest Shim’un (Simon). He was ordained a deacon in 1718, and then a priest for St. Thomas Church by the Maphryono of the East, Li’azar IV, shortly before 1726. In 1742, he visited Jerusalem. As a widower he became a monk at the Za’faran Monastery. Patriarch Jirjis III ordained him a bishop for the Patriarchal Office at the church of Amid and called him Cyril Rizq Allah at his ordination in the middle of 1749. When his cousin Gurgis III became Maphryono of the East in 1760 and was forced to stay at the Patriarchal Monastery (Za’faran), he appointed Cyril Rizq Allah as his deputy to the diocese of Mosul. He added to his responsibilities the vacant dioceses of the Monastery of Mar Behnam and the Monastery of Mar Matta. This situation continued until Behnam was appointed a bishop for the diocese of the Monastery of Mar Behnam in 1762, and Metropolitan Matta was appointed a bishop for the diocese of the Monastery of Mar Matta in 1770. In 1768, Cyril Rizq Allah attended the Synod of Amid, which elected Patriarch Jirjis IV, and partook in the ceremony of his consecration at the Za’faran Monastery. He remained at this monastery until the following year.

While he was serving the diocese of the East for twelve years, the city of Mosul and its environs were afflicted with a horrible plague in 1772. Four thousand souls of the great village of Qaraqosh (Khudayda) perished, including seventy-two priests and deacons.<sup>153</sup> In the course of two months, 4,000 parishioners of Mosul perished, including the entire group of priests. For three months, worship ceased in that church. Cyril Rizq Allah died on April 26 and

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<sup>153</sup> Thus according to a date etched in Syriac on a stone at the Church of Mar Gurgis in Qaraqosh.

was buried in the tomb of Patriarch Ishaq and the Maphryono Matta II. May God have mercy on them all! Inscribed on his tomb is the date of his death in the twelve-syllabic meter. He served his office for twenty-three years. He was, may God have mercy on him, a godly, zealous, and intelligent shepherd. He donated his cross, on which were inscribed his name and the date of his ordination, to the Monastery of Mar Matta.

Cyril Rizq Allah composed thirty-seven succinct homilies in plain style<sup>154</sup> and a short tract in Syriac on the rules of Syriac morphology,<sup>155</sup> and the *Order of Funeral for Nuns*.<sup>156</sup> The manuscripts which he transcribed in his good handwriting include *Book of the Dove* by Bar Hebraeus, which he started at Aleppo in 1742 and finished at Jerusalem; *Book of the Councils* by Severus ibn al-Muqaffa', which he finished in 1742 when he was still a priest (in the possession of the Chorepsicopus Bishara in Diyarbakr); a *Book of Grammar* or *Introduction to Grammar and Sembe* (The Book of Lights) by Bar Hebraeus, which he completed in 1736;<sup>157</sup> and a scrapbook at the Library of the Za'faran Monastery (MS 234).

## 6- ATHANASIUS 'ABD AL-KARIM, METROPOLITAN OF THE PATRIARCHAL OFFICE (1749–1755)

Athanasius 'Abd al-Karim was the son of the deacon Shahin Shammo, known as Ibn 'Araqchinchī of Amid. His mother was Qamar. He was a brother of Metropolitan Iyawannis Yuhanna of Amid, whose biography has been previously cited among the bishops ordained by Patriarch Shukr Allah (p. 51). He traveled to Abyssinia and then to Malabar, India. He was rough and of harsh conduct, which caused him to fail.

'Abd al-Karim was ordained a deacon in 1716 and then entered the Za'faran Monastery, where he assumed the monastic habit. He was ordained a priest in 1727, and for some time he and his brother moved to the Monastery of Mar Matta, but 'Abd al-Karim later returned to the Za'faran Monastery. In 1749, Patriarch Jirjis III ordained him a metropolitan at Amid for the Patriarchal Office, calling him Athanasius 'Abd al-Karim at his ordination. When his brother returned from Malabar at the end of 1752 to become the bishop of the diocese of Bedlis, 'Abd al-Karim was in his company and spent the rest of his

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<sup>154</sup> Manchester, Mingana MS 277, transcribed in 1796.

<sup>155</sup> Three copies of this tract are at Mosul. One of them consists of 73 pages. A seventeen-page copy is at Berlin.

<sup>156</sup> Sharfa MSS.

<sup>157</sup> Cambridge MS 2011.

life in that diocese. He passed away in a village of Bedlis in 1755, shortly after the death of his brother.<sup>158</sup> He was little more than sixty years old. At the Monastery of St. Mark in the Bushairiyya, there is a Gospel transcribed in his handwriting and that of his brother.

### **7- GREGORIUS TUMA, METROPOLITAN OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR ILIYYA (ELIJAH) IN QANQART (1750–1752)**

Gregorius Tuma was born in the city of Amid. He entered the Za'faran Monastery and assumed the monastic habit. He was ordained a priest by Metropolitan Cyril Jirjis Sani'a of Mardin in 1728. On June 1, 1750, Patriarch Jirjis III ordained him a metropolitan for the Monastery of Mar Iliyya (The Prophet Elijah) in Qanqart and called him Gregorius Tuma at his ordination.<sup>159</sup> Patriarch Jirjis III mentioned him in his letter to Maphryono Shukr Allah and Metropolitan Yuhanna, dated August 27, 1752.<sup>160</sup> This is all the information we have about him. Most likely he did not live long.

### **8- TIMOTHY TUMA, METROPOLITAN OF THE PATRIARCHAL OFFICE, OF GARGAR, OF EDESSA, AND THEN OF AMID (1752–1773)**

Timothy Tuma was a son of Saliba Halabiyya of Qutrubul. His mother was Maryam. He was born in Qutrubul, a village on the Tigris river opposite Amid. It was then populated by 700 Syrian families ministered to by eight priests. At an early age he desired the monastic life and, renouncing the world, he entered the Za'faran Monastery, where he studied religious science. On November 27, 1722, he was ordained a deacon by Timothy 'Isa of Mosul, metropolitan of the monastery, and began to learn the Syriac language, in which he became quite proficient. He moved to the Monastery of the Sayyida (the Virgin Mary) in Hattack and studied under its superior, Metropolitan Cyril Gurgis. The metropolitan clothed him with the monastic habit and then ordained him a priest in 1728. After his ordination he returned to the Za'faran Monastery and was engaged for some time in copying, in good hand, Syriac church books. In the middle of 1752, at the church of Amid, Patriarch Jirjis III ordained him a metropolitan for the Patriarchal Office and called him Timothy Tuma at his ordination. Gregorius Tuma, mentioned above, witnessed his ordination.

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<sup>158</sup> According to the account of the deacon 'Azar of Aleppo, mentioned earlier.

<sup>159</sup> MSS at our Library, and the roster of bishops, a copy of which, transcribed by one of the contemporaries, is at Sadad.

<sup>160</sup> *tr. note*: See ancient letters in our Library. This letter is in my possession.

Timothy resided at the church of Amid, serving the patriarch and copying books from time to time. He later resided at his native Qutrubul. Then the patriarch appointed him head of the diocese of Gargar, which became vacant with the death of Metropolitan Faraj Allah of Edessa. But Timothy did not hold on to this position. Around 1755, the patriarch transferred him to Edessa and changed his name to Severus, following the custom of the bishops of Edessa of that time, who changed their names. It is believed that he grossly misbehaved, for the patriarch condemned him for misbehavior. He suspended him from service, and then in October 1762 condemned and banished him to the citadel of Alamiya, in the vicinity of Istanbul. Later Timothy repented and appealed to the patriarch for forgiveness. The patriarch forgave him, absolved him, and restored him to his diocese.<sup>161</sup>

In 1768, Timothy attended the Synod of Amid to elect Patriarch Jirjis IV. The new patriarch transferred him to the diocese of Amid in the latter part of that year. He assumed the name Athanasius; the custom of changing the names (of bishops) affected him three times, which had never happened except in his case. He passed away in 1773, having served his office for twenty-one years, and was buried, it is said, in the Church of St. Thomas at Qutrubul. His seal was inscribed as follows: "Timothy Tuma, metropolitan, 1752, the servant of God, who seeks His grace."<sup>162</sup>

We have come upon some of the books he transcribed, including a *Book of Husoyos for the Consecration of the Church and of Lent*, which he completed at the Za'faran Monastery on June 20, 1749. This book was deposited at the church of the Mansuriyya. Other books include *An Abridged Commentary on Psalms* by the Salahi (Daniel of Salah, d. 542), in Garshuni, which he completed on June 1, 1750;<sup>163</sup> a *Service Book for the Resurrection*, which he finished on September 4, 1751, and which was donated by Patriarch Jirjis III to the church of Edessa; two parts of the *Order of Funerals* at the church of Amid, completed in the middle of October 1752; two *Service Books for the Summer*, transcribed at Amid on May 24, 1755, and donated by the Chorepiscopus 'Abd al-Nur Aslan to St. Mark Monastery in Jerusalem;<sup>164</sup> a prayer book which he copied in 1756, at the

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<sup>161</sup> See the roster of bishops, already mentioned.

<sup>162</sup> In his *Collection*, the priest Gabriel Doulabani quotes Dionysius 'Abd al-Nur, metropolitan of Amid (d. 1933), who in turn quotes some elders of his time, saying that Gregorius Tuma was nicknamed Alton Dish, meaning "he of the gold tooth," and that he was banished because of faith. He was known for his zeal. This account, however, cannot stand scrutiny and has been refuted by his contemporaries.

<sup>163</sup> This book is in the possession of Hanna Najmi in Diyarbakr.

<sup>164</sup> St. Mark's Monastery MSS 14 and 15.

village of Bati; and a medium-sized *Service Book for Lent*, which he transcribed at the end of his life in 1770, in Edessa.

### 9- GREGORIUS YUHANNA, METROPOLITAN OF DAMASCUS (1754–1783)

Gregorius Yuhanna was the most prominent church father of his time because of his zeal and determination. He was born Yuhanna Shuqayr, originally from Sadad, but is considered a man of Aleppo by birth and upbringing. Shuqayr was an ancient family of Sadad whose fame dated back to the year 1527.<sup>165</sup> Its offshoots are still known in Sadad, although by a new name. Gregorius Yuhanna was thought to have been born in the first decade of the eighteenth century. He was attached to the church of Aleppo and studied under Mapahryono Shukr Allah of Aleppo, of blessed memory. Having obtained a good part of the Syriac language and religious sciences, he was ordained a deacon before the year 1747 and then entered the Monastery of Mar Musa the Abbyssinian, where he engaged in religious devotion. He was ordained a priest by his superior, Bishop Sarukhan. Reports of his excellent character reached Patriarch Jirjis III at the time when the diocese of Damascus was saddened by the death of its Bishop Gregorius Tuma. This led the patriarch to designate him as his deputy in the diocese of Damascus in the middle of 1752. In 1754, the patriarch summoned him to Amid and ordained him a metropolitan, calling him Gregorius at his ordination. Metropolitan Timothy Tuma of Qutrubul witnessed his ordination.

The patriarch, who, like his predecessor Patriarch Shukr Allah, was keen on the dissemination of learning among the clergy, noticed Gregorius's activity, diligence, and knowledge of the Syriac language. He entrusted him with the translation of Michael Rabo's *Chronicle* from Syriac into Arabic, in order to render it more beneficial and to publicize its excellent qualities. The new metropolitan undertook the work with utmost diligence. He translated this voluminous work, which contained profane and ecclesiastical history, and natural phenomena, extending from the creation to the year 1196.<sup>166</sup> It took him a year and six months to complete the translation of the whole work in three large volumes, of which he produced a rough copy. Then he made a fair Garshuni (Arabic in Syriac script) copy of it in his average handwriting, in one

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<sup>165</sup> Bibliotheque Nationale, MS 289

<sup>166</sup> *tr. note:* In his *Al-Lulu al-Manthur*, Patriarch Aphram Barsoum said that this history extended to the year 1193. See Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum, *Al-Lulu al-Manthur*, trans. Matti Moosa as *The Scattered Pearls* (Gorgias Press, 2003), 445.

thick volume consisting of 770 large pages. He worked on the translation at the Church of Mar Behnam in Damascus and completed it in the middle of September of the year 2070 of the Greeks/1795 AD. He donated the copy to the patriarch in recognition of his support and encouragement. Gregorius Yuhanna mentioned that he had made this translation form two Syriac copies in the handwriting of the deacon Barsoum and Rabban Mikha'il, both of which were made from the copy of Metropolitan Musa of Sawar. Another copy was made by Rev. Mikha'il 'Urbishi, later a metropolitan of Gargar, which he came upon at the Monastery of Mar Abhai. As for the first copies that Gregorius Yuhanna made, we found no trace of them.<sup>167</sup> This translation was made in average Arabic language, of slightly archaic and plain style, similar to that of most of his contemporaries. But it displays his utmost determination, fortitude, and love of knowledge. May God reward him for his contribution and shower him with his mercy.<sup>168</sup> From Yuhanna's translation the copy of Sadad was made in 1764; and two more copies in Mosul, dated 1846 and 1870, found their way to London and Amid. It is also thought that Gregorius Yuhanna was the author of a historical tract of biographies of four patriarchs—Jirjis II, Ishaq, Shukr Allah, and Jirjis III—to which he appended the names of the bishops they ordained from 1587 to 1795. From these were made two copies; one, dated 1887, is at present at the Vatican, and the other, dated 1899, is at the St. Mark Monastery in Jerusalem.<sup>169</sup>

In 1771, Gregorius Yuhanna attended the ordination of Musa, bishop of the Monastery of Mar Musa, at the Za'faran Monastery.<sup>170</sup> In 1781, when the patriarchal see became vacant, he was unable to attend the synod for the election of a new patriarch because of old age and because the Metropolitan

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<sup>167</sup> Za'faran MS. The number of the MS is missing.

<sup>168</sup> *tr. note:* I tend to disagree with Patriarch Aphram Barsoum regarding the style of Gregorius Yuhanna Shuqayr. I have read his translation in Garshuni at length and used it in writing my manuscript on the Crusades. Although Yuhanna's diction and style clearly do not match Barsoum's florid and hyperbolic language, they are simple and articulate. In general, for its simplicity and articulation, Shuqayr's work rivals the modern translation of the same work by Mar Gregorius Saliba Shim'un, metropolitan of Mosul (Dar Mardin: Aleppo, 1996). To the modern reader, of course, Shim'un's translation is in conformity with the language used today in the Arab world. Still, this should not diminish the value of Yuhanna Shuqayr's translation. But both translators, lacking access to foreign sources, especially Latin and Greek, copied the names of men and events as they appear in their garbled form in the original Syriac, rendering them unintelligible.

<sup>169</sup> *tr. note:* The British Museum copy is MS 4402.

<sup>170</sup> According to a copy of his *systatikon* at our Library.

Mikha'il Jarwa was assaulting the Orthodox faith. Instead, Gregorius Yuhanna wrote a letter to the assembled fathers in which he incorporated the principles of the Orthodox faith. It was well received by the fathers and the faithful. After administering his diocese as a guide and preacher, and after keeping the wolves away from it for twenty-nine years (according to a letter written in verse by Bishop Ibrahim of Sadad in July 1772), Shuqayr passed away in June 1783 and was buried in the church of Damascus.

Gregorius Yuhanna composed spiritual songs in colloquial Arabic, one of which, on the Resurrection, is chanted even today in most of the Syrian churches. It begins, "The holy fasting of Christ ended in peace." A pleasant song about the Virgin begins, "The praise of the Virgin is sweet to me." Still another song on Mar Musa the Abyssinian begins thus: "I begin by the name of the Almighty God."<sup>171</sup> Of his transcribed manuscripts, we have come upon a book of homilies by Maphryono Shim'un, which he copied for Tuma, bishop of Damascus, and completed on December 16, 1747; the *Ethicon*, by Bar Hebraeus, in Garshuni, which he copied for the deacon 'Aziz, son of 'Azar Shamiyya of Aleppo, completed on August 2, 1752; a *beth gaz* (book of church melodies) which he completed on June 18, 1747;<sup>172</sup> and a *Synaxarium* (The Lives of Holy Saints) by a Coptic writer, which he completed on June 9, 1771 and donated to the Church of the Virgin, Mar Qawma, and Mar Dumit at the village of Rashayya.<sup>173</sup>

The seal of Gregorius Yuhanna was large and circular, bearing the following inscription, "By the grace of God, his servant Gregorius Yuhanna, Metropolitan of Damascus, 1756." He dated it two years after his ordination.

## 10- GREGORIUS SHIM'UN, METROPOLITAN OF BUSHAIRIYYA (1760–1772)

Gregorius Shim'un, of Armenian origin, was a native of the village of Kufra, in the vicinity of Gharzan in the province of Bedlis, to which he ascribes his origin. At an early age he joined the Syrian Church and entered the Monastery of Mar Quryaqos in Bushairiyya. He studied the Syriac language under Metropolitan Gregorius Boghos (Paul), head of the aforementioned diocese (1731–1764). Metropolitan Boghos clothed him with the monastic habit and then ordained him a priest shortly before 1737. Upon the resignation of Boghos, Patriarch Jirjis III, who recognized his ability, ordained him a

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<sup>171</sup> According to an MS of Homs and its villages.

<sup>172</sup> Sharfa MS 35

<sup>173</sup> This Synaxarium is at the Church of Mar Musa in Damascus.

metropolitan for the Bushairiyya diocese at the church of Amid in 1760 and called him Gregorius Shim'un at his ordination. We came upon copies of documents recording the Metropolitan's ordination of deacons and priests for the Monastery of Mar Quryaqos and Se'ert and its villages from 1760 to 1769.<sup>174</sup> In 1768, he attended the synod that elected Patriarch Jirjis IV and participated in his installation. He was still living on March 11, 1771. It is believed that he died in the following year, having served his office for twelve years. He was succeeded by Iyawannis Ni'ma, or Tu'ma, of Sadad.

### **11- BASILIUS GURGIS, MAPHRYONO OF THE EAST (1760–1768)**

Basilus (Cyril) Gurgis, metropolitan of Hattack, and then of the Za'faran Monastery and of Mardin, was a son of the deacon Musa, of the family of the priest 'Abd al-Jalil of Mosul. His biography up to the year 1760 has already been discussed (p. 49). When the See of the East became vacant with the death of Maphryono Basilus Li'azar IV in September 1759, Patriarch Jirjis III ordained him a Maphryono of the East at the church of Amid in September 1760 and called him Basilus Gurgis. He was the third by this name and the ninetyeth of the Maphryonos of the East. His ordination was attended by Gregorius Jirjis, metropolitan of Jerusalem, Bishop Cyril Rizq Allah, and Gregorius Shim'un, metropolitan of Bushairiyya. The administration of the Patriarchal Monastery (Za'faran Monastery) was entrusted to him because the patriarch was residing in Amid. Meanwhile, he appointed Bishop Cyril Rizq Allah, son of his aunt on his father's side, as his deputy to administer the diocese of Mosul. Basilus Gurgis managed the diocese of Mardin with commendable ardor.

In that year, 1760, he donated from his own money to the Za'faran Monastery a pair of fans, each weighing 400 dirhams, a silver four-branched chandelier, a six-branched chandelier, and two small lamps.<sup>175</sup> He ordained three bishops. Eight years and six months later, he ascended the patriarchal throne, as shall be seen shortly (ch. 5).

### **12- GREGORIUS BEHNAM, METROPOLITAN OF MA'DAN (1761–1769)**

Gregorius was a native of Ma'dan. He became a novice at the Za'faran Monastery in 1742 and then a priest. In 1761, at the church of Amid, Patriarch

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<sup>174</sup> MS at the Library of the Monastery of St. Mark.

<sup>175</sup> MSS of the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin, and of the Za'faran Monastery.



Jirjis III ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of Ma'dan, whose seat was at the monastery of Mar Quryaqos, and called him Gregorius Behnam. We found his name in some manuscripts up to 1769, when he and nine other bishops presented themselves to Patriarch Jirjis IV on March 8.<sup>176</sup> The year of his death is unknown. But based on the ordination date of his successor Dionysius Shim'un (1779), he must have died shortly before that year.

### 13- DIONYSIUS MIKHA'IL, METROPOLITAN OF ALEPPO (1766–1775)

Dionysius Mikha'il was the son of deacon Ni'mat Allah, son of Mikha'il Jarwa.<sup>177</sup> He was born at Aleppo on January 3, 1721. He acquired a rudimentary knowledge of church sciences under Maphryono Basilius Shukr Allah of Aleppo, and was ordained a deacon around 1747. In 1757, Jirjis of Aleppo, metropolitan of Jerusalem, ordained him a priest.<sup>178</sup> In 1758, Patriarch Jirjis III appointed him his deputy for the vacant Aleppo diocese. In 1765, he visited the patriarch at Amid and remained in that city for one year. When the congregation of Aleppo chose him as their metropolitan, the patriarch ordained him, on February 23, 1766, at the church of Amid and called him Dionysius at his ordination. His ordination was attended by Metropolitan Jirjis, already mentioned. Inscribed on his seal was the following: "By the mercy of God, Metropolitan Mikha'il of the city of Aleppo, 1766."

At that time, the Latin (Roman Catholic) padres were casting their nets to ensnare the simple folk of the various Eastern churches in order to cause them to adopt their doctrine. As a stratagem, they used innovative Latin ritual customs, which found acceptance among many Syrians of Aleppo. Meanwhile, the French consul, Peter Depiere Derio, played a great role in assuring these people of the assistance of his government. Both the Latin padres and the French consul enticed the Syrians to install their own patriarch in Aleppo. Metropolitan Mikha'il Jarwa fell into their trap and his doctrine became corrupted because he attached himself to them. Patriarch Jirjis wrote to him, offering him counsel and guidance. He invited him to come to the Za'faran Monastery in the hope of correcting his waywardness. Mikha'il Jarwa journeyed to the Za'faran Monastery, where he remained for a long time, but to no avail. Eventually, he fled back to Aleppo. There he stopped merely prevaricating and

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<sup>176</sup> According to *A Service Book for Major Feasts* at the church of Diyarbakr.

<sup>177</sup> According to a service book for feasts at the Church of St. Mark's Monastery, Jerusalem MS 11.

<sup>178</sup> According to his *Homologia* (Confession of Faith) at the Za'faran Monastery

resorted to open perfidy. In 1774, he renounced the Holy and Orthodox (Syrian) Church, declaring that he had joined the Western Latin (Roman Catholic) faith. Most of the Syrian congregation and priests of Aleppo also joined this faith.<sup>179</sup> They did this arbitrarily and out of ignorance, having been infected by an old leaven which had been fermenting since the time of Andrew Akhijan of Mardin and Peter Bedin of Edessa in the middle of the previous (seventeenth) century.<sup>180</sup> We need not mention that most Syrians then lacked religious knowledge and understanding of the Syriac language of their fathers. Thus, they fell prey to seducers.

When the patriarch saw the danger that was threatening the diocese, he traveled to Aleppo accompanied by a number of bishops and monks, arriving in the city on May 22, 1775. He gained control of the church building (which had been seized by the schismatics) and punished the bishop (Jarwa) and his faction. This cost the patriarch thirty purses, or 15,000 piasters, equivalent to 1,500 golden liras.<sup>181</sup> The schismatics, however, re-seized the church building, using foreign (French) influence and bribing the (Ottoman) officials. The patriarch returned to his see and suspended and anathematized the metropolitan (Jarwa). Meantime, a friend of Jarwa named Yusuf Qudsi, leader of the small schismatic faction, arrived in Aleppo denouncing and challenging Jarwa. But the French consul supported Jarwa and banished the Latin padres who opposed him.<sup>182</sup> Patriarch Jirjis obtained a *firman* (royal edict) from the Ottoman government to banish the culprit and a number of his supporters, but Jarwa escaped, as usual, to Latakia and then to Cyprus. Finally he ended up in Egypt. At the end of 1777, the patriarch ordained Dionysius ‘Abd Allah Shidyaq of Aleppo as metropolitan for Aleppo. In 1778, Mikha’il Jarwa fled from his place of exile and returned to Aleppo after bribing the Wali (governor) with a great amount of money. Bribery was a plague of the Ottoman governors, whose state then was at its worst, its judicial principles thrown into disorder.

Still, Mikha’il Jarwa was not satisfied with what he had done. When the patriarchal see became vacant with the death of Patriarch Jirjis IV on July 21,

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<sup>179</sup> Rabbath, *Inédits Documents*, 1:592

<sup>180</sup> *tr. note*: Akhijan was a Syrian Orthodox cleric who was entrapped by Latin friars and converted to Catholicism in the seventeenth century. The Latins had him ordained as an unlawful patriarch of the schismatic group of the Syrian Church, who today are known as Syrian Catholics.

<sup>181</sup> According to the letter of Chorepiscopus Yaquab (Jacob) of Qutrubul in refutation of Mikha’il Jarwa in 1775.

<sup>182</sup> Rabbath, *Inédits Documents*, 2:592–597

1781, he became driven by ambition and ill intentions to possess it. He was encouraged by the Western (European) Roman Catholics, who enticed him to snatch the leadership of the (Syrian Orthodox) Church in any manner conceivable. He proceeded to accomplish his intention by means of bribery with the support of a few parishioners who had fallen into the same (Roman Catholic) trap, especially in the city of Mardin, where some Syrians had been secretly dancing to the (Roman Catholic) tune for sixteen years. They were instigated by those Armenians and Chaldeans who had already embraced the papal doctrine.

Jarwa arrived in Mardin in the middle of November, bearing gems and gifts for its officials in order to achieve his goal. He resided at the Church of the Forty Martyrs. He almost choked to see that the majority of the Syrians supported the patriarchal deputy, Cyril Matta, metropolitan of the Monastery of Mar Matta and Mosul. His stratagem was to offer hefty bribes to the Ottoman governors of Diyarbakr, Mardin, and Baghdad, to which Mardin was then subject. What helped him most, though, was the corruption of the Ottoman state and the degeneration of the feudalistic system. This corruption was most noticeable in Mardin, the administration of which was controlled by ignorant and tyrannical Kurdish aghas (lords) who understood only the worst aspects of life. They took turns in the administration of the city for short periods, during which they satiated their greed with licit and illicit money.<sup>183</sup> Being corrupt and used to bribery, these governors strongly supported Jarwa in achieving his aim. But the Syrian Orthodox people, who adhered to their faith, renounced Jarwa's schismatic dereliction. Two bishops, Cyril Matta and his brother Metropolitan Julius 'Abd al-Ahad, superior of the Za'faran Monastery, challenged him to return to the church's fold, but he kept persisting in his stubbornness. He became even more intransigent. What most emboldened him, however, was his reliance on a small group which was instigating him to return stealthily to Aleppo. He repaired to Aleppo to add more fuel to the fire of enmity, schism and sedition. He borrowed, as he said, a great amount of money to offer as a bribe to the Kurdish governor of Mardin, 'Isa Beg, son of Muharram Beg Mulli. He likewise bribed the notables of the city, who supported him against his opponents (the Syrian Orthodox) and even forced them to join him. His faction offered the governor an amount of money, which

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<sup>183</sup> In the time of the Ottoman Sultan Mustafa III (1757–1773), corruption, bribery and treason reached an unimaginable level. In the reign of his successor, 'Abd al-Hamid I (1773–1787), chaotic conditions of the state became paramount, and calamities afflicted the Ottoman state so much that it caused the sultan to die from grief. See Shakib Arslan, *Appendix to the Prolegomena of Ibn Khaldun*, pp. 270–275.

he sent to Sulayman Pasha al-Kabir Abu Sa'id, Wali of Baghdad, requesting him to install their man, Mikha'il Jarwa, as patriarch. They also offered Sulyman Pasha 6,000 piasters to obtain a decree from the Ottoman State (Sultan) recognizing Jarwa as patriarch. Thirty days later, the Wali of Baghdad issued an order to the governor of Mardin to install Jarwa as patriarch over the Za'faran Monastery. The governor obeyed, as Jarwa himself had said he would.

Furthermore, Jarwa ensnared two (Syrian Orthodox) bishops, Iyawannis Tu'ma or Ni'ma of Sadad, who was bishop of Midyat (1779–1780), and Athanasius Musa Sabbagh of Aleppo, who was a newcomer to the monastic order and the priesthood. He was ordained a priest-monk in 1777. He was sent by the patriarch to Azekh in the fall of 1780 to collect the patriarchal tithes and to supervise the building of its church. Sabbagh remained at Azekh until the summer of 1781. When he learned of the death of the patriarch, he called on the Maphryono of Tur Abdin, Saliba, hoping to fulfill his own ambition: He persuaded the maphryono to ordain him a bishop. The maphryono ordained him a bishop, but without a diocese.<sup>184</sup> Sabbagh turned to Jarwa, hoping to find him a position. Meantime, the governor (of Mardin) forced two more bishops, Gregorius Bishara of Bedlis, metropolitan of Jerusalem, and Cyril Ibrahim Baddi of Mardin, another new priest in the service of the Patriarchal Office, to defect. Jarwa took these bishops to the Za'faran Monastery and forced them to ordain him as patriarch, as he claimed. According to church law, no patriarch can be ordained without a synod of bishops, which must elect him to be patriarch. This usurpation of the patriarchate occurred on January 25, 1782. Jarwa returned to Mardin to force the congregation and clergy to join him. He even had his opponents thrown into prison. These sad events, however, displeased Metropolitan Matta, his brother, and the clergy of the Syrian Church. To avoid Jarwa's machinations, the two bishops fled at night to Qal'at al-Imra'a and then to Tur 'Abdin, accompanied by a great number of monks. They met with Barsoum of Arbo, Patriarch of Tur 'Abdin, Maphryono Saliba, and other bishops of Tur 'Abdin. They convened a synod and discussed the disaster inflicted on the Apostolic See by the usurper (Jarwa). They denounced Jarwa and chose Metropolitan Cyril Matta. They took him to the Monastery of Mar Abai in Qellith and ordained him a Maphryono of the Patriarchal See. The new maphryono began his tenure by ordaining four bishops. On February 6, 1782, the festival of Cana of Galilee, they celebrated his consecration as Patriarch of Antioch. The new patriarch sent his brother to the Ottoman capital to obtain a royal decree of his investiture.

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<sup>184</sup> MSS of Azekh and Tur 'Abdin.

Meanwhile, Mikha'il Jarwa contacted the governor of Amid, 'Abdi Pasha, who forced some of its (Syrian Orthodox) people to join Jarwa. He also arrested Jarwa's opponents and threw them in chains into prison on February 16 and March 3. Among them were the priests Fath Allah, Yaqub Shami, Yeshu', son of Jabi, and others. But they were later released and returned to their churches. Metropolitan Bishara and Metropolitan Ibrahim managed to escape Jarwa's coercion and joined the patriarch. Jarwa resided for six months at Mardin and then at the Za'faran Monastery. He stretched out his hand to rob the valuable vessels and manuscripts of the monastery, which he sent to Aleppo.<sup>185</sup> He resorted to trickery, bribery, and calumny to obstruct the activities of Patriarch Matta. He even succeeded in having the governor of Mardin summon the patriarch and his bishops and cast them in chains into prison. Three days later, the prison collapsed from heavy rain, but God saved the prisoners. The governor let them go free. On their way to the village of Qutrubul, whose congregation had invited them for a visit, Mikha'il Jarwa and his partisans bribed the governor of Amid, who arrested them. They were twelve in number, including the patriarch, a metropolitan, and monks. The governor was about to execute them, but they ransomed themselves for twelve purses (6,000 piasters).

Meanwhile, Metropolitan 'Abd al-Ahad returned to Mardin carrying the sultan's decree of the patriarch's investiture, which caused the Syrian Orthodox people to rejoice. Both the governor and the qadi (religious judge) of Amid had the decree officially registered, and handed over the church building (which had been seized by Jarwa) to Patriarch Matta. The patriarch came to Mardin and was received cordially by the governor of the city, who offered him his own mule to mount as he entered the city. The patriarch entered Mardin and proceeded to the Church of the Forty Martyrs with great pomp, in which the whole city celebrated. He evicted the usurper from the church premises, and Jarwa left discomfited and humiliated. The patriarch advised Jarwa once more to desist from schism, but to no avail. Seeing that he was still insistent on his error, the patriarch had no choice but to banish him to the Khatuniyya citadel, situated on a small lake near the Sinjar Mountain in northern Iraq. But Jarwa,

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<sup>185</sup> *tr. note:* I personally saw these manuscripts and checked some of them at the Sharfa Monastery in Lebanon in the summer of 1968. When I asked the monk who showed them to me to whom they had originally belonged and how they got to the Sharfa Monastery, he was timid and reluctant to give me a satisfactory answer. When I told him that Mikha'il Jarwa was the one who looted the Library of the Za'faran Monastery and its manuscripts, which ended up in the Sharfa Monastery, the host monk kept silent and said not a word.

using bribery, succeeded in changing his place of banishment to the city of Mosul, and then to Baghdad. Meanwhile, the patriarch obtained a special *firman* (royal decree) for his banishment and some of his partisans because he had disturbed the peace of the governors and their subjects by planting seeds of sedition among them. When Jarwa realized that he was cornered and his bribes were ineffective, he feared the consequences of his wickedness. He left Baghdad in disguise at night on camelback. He passed through barren country until he reached the village of 'Adra, near Damascus, populated by Muslims. He sent a message to the few acquaintances who had secretly kept his faith, but they refused to receive him for fear of the governors. Being vagrant and fugitive, Jarwa found refuge in a ruined monastery belonging to the Maronites, in the village of Beit Shabab in the Kisrawan Mountain, in Lebanon. Months later, he was compelled to leave the monastery when Maronite nuns came to abide in it. The nuns had escaped the ravages of the war then going on between the Amir Yusuf al-Shihabi (1770–1790) and two other amirs of his own family who had challenged his authority. Worse still, Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar, the governor of Sidon, had occupied the country (Lebanon). So Jarwa went to stay in a small monastery newly built in the village of Shaybaniyya, called the Monastery of Mar Ephraim al-Raghm.<sup>186</sup> The monastery was inhabited by a few adherents of his faith, including his friend Yusuf Qudsi, who it is said was a merchant. These men, however, disliked his staying at the monastery because they were aware of his case and abhorred his cunning. For four more months he stayed with a destitute peasant. At the beginning of 1785, he rented a small house at the Sharfa of Der'un as his residence.

Jarwa realized that his nets were torn up and his endeavors in the country of Beth Nahrin met with failure. Also, he despaired of receiving aid from the French government through his friends. France was in turmoil: the Revolution erupted in 1789, and King Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette were guillotined in 1793.<sup>187</sup> In his predicament, Jarwa turned to Spain. He wrote to a Spanish countess about his condition in a tear-compelling manner asking for help. The countess sent him some money which enabled him to settle his debts and buy the house he had rented. He remained in this condition until his death on September 15, 1800, having suffered for two years from serious diseases.

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<sup>186</sup> Built in 1709 and destroyed by fire in 1841.

<sup>187</sup> Despite his intelligence, King Louis XV was lazy and profligate. In his reign (1743–1774) there was turmoil in political affairs, where women had the upper hand. His grandson and successor, Louis XVI, was likewise of good heart and character, but of timid disposition and will. He failed to reform France, which revolted against him. See Scoud, *The History of France*, pp. 380, 386, 434.

As for Metropolitan Ni'ma of Sadad, he spent his life attached to Jarwa. He was indolent and is not remembered for any achievement. So was Bishop Musa of Aleppo, a liar who joined Jarwa out of ambition, hoping to receive a better position in the church. When he failed, he became embittered and turned against Jarwa. He remained at home in Aleppo, desperate and inactive, avoiding Jarwa's partisans until his death shortly after 1818.

After the death of Mikha'il Jarwa, his few partisans continued plotting against each other for thirty more years. Since they were only two or three bishops without dioceses, except the bishop of Qaraqosh, they sought the aid of bishops of Western (Latin) denominations to be ordained to a higher office. If it is true, as was believed then, that Jarwa spent 50,000 piasters on his schismatic manipulations, and that his schism cost the Syrian Orthodox Church 150,000 piasters, estimated at 20,000 to 25,000 golden liras, one can easily realize how much damage this wicked man did the church. This is not to mention the moral and spiritual harm, which is far more serious than any other hurt he caused the church. Unfortunately, when wicked intentions possess the heart, they will corrupt it. And when ignorance controls the mind of man, it will cause him to lose his way.

We have collected the above information briefly from trustworthy eyewitnesses whose testimonies are unanimous.<sup>188</sup> It is not true, as Jarwa himself claimed, that what he did was done with meekness (Jarwa's story in his own words)—so also claimed some of his later followers, who fabricated his life story and lavished praise on him, describing him as the paragon of knowledge and righteousness.<sup>189</sup> One of them, however, refuted them, ascribing to Jarwa ignorance, cunning, and machination.<sup>190</sup> This view was

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<sup>188</sup> See the roster of the Syrian patriarch by Metropolitan 'Abd Allah al-Shidyāq (d. 1801), derived from a copy in his own handwriting found at the home of Hannush al-Khuri Yusuf in Diyarbakr; a short roster of bishops appended by a contemporary to the *Chronicle* of Patriarch Mikha'il Rabo, in the two copies of Sadad and Jerusalem; the comment of Deacon Mikha'il, son of Dawud of Nabk, in the *Book of Husoyas for Lent* in 1783, and another one by Metropolitan Elias al-Akhras (d. 1792), and others.

<sup>189</sup> *tr. note:* See Viscount Philip Tarrazi, *Al-Salasil al-Tarikhiyya fi Asaqifat al-Abrashiyyat al-Suryaniyya* (Beirut, 1910), 212–228, and Dionysius Afram Naqqasha, *Kitab Inayat al-Rahman fi Hidayat al-Suryan* (Beirut, 1910), 186–217. In fact, the greater part of this book is about Jarwa. Both of these sources are highly biased and should be read with utmost caution.

<sup>190</sup> *tr. note:* The reference here is to Metropolitan Jirjis Shahin (1839–1927), a Syrian Catholic who was totally displeased with his church and its chief clerics. But he did not leave it. He wrote two monographs admitting that his own people had seceded from the Syrian Orthodox Mother Church. Specifically, he discussed Mikha'il Jarwa in

corroborated by some of Jarwa's letters, addressed to the distinguished Western people who supported him, which he embellished with obvious phases of pride, arrogance, and false zeal. He did not even feel ashamed to display in them his disdainful treatment of his lord, the patriarch of Antioch, who had ordained him a metropolitan. Outwardly, he showed affection and obedience to the patriarch, but inwardly, he harbored disobedience and schism. Jarwa had a speech impediment which caused him to stammer, not to mention his ignorance of both Syriac and Arabic languages and belles-lettres.

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his monograph entitled *Kashf al-Anqiba 'an Wujun al-Mu'allifin wa al-Mu'arrikhin al-Kadhaba* ["Removing the Veils from the Faces of False Writers and Historians"] (Beirut, 1911). On p. 12, he says about Mikha'il Jarwa, "He, may God have mercy on him, was dumb; his speech was marked by stuttering. People did not like the way he spoke. But he was clever and cunning. Thus, when Aphram Naqqasha of Mosul said in *Inayat al-Rahman*, p. 330, that Patriarch (Jarwa) was eloquent, having a sweet manner of speech, it was but one of the many lies with which he embellished his book.



## 5 PATRIARCH IGNATIUS JIRJIS IV (1768–1781)

Patriarch Jurjis IV ascended the Apostolic Throne at the Za'faran Monastery on Sunday, August 17, 1768. He passed away on July 21, 1781, having served his office for twelve years, eleven months and four days. He was seventy-two years old. After his death, the Apostolic See remained vacant for six and a half months.

Jirjis was the son of deacon Musa, of the family of the priest 'Abd al-Jalil. He was born in Mosul in 1709 and raised in a virtuous and spiritual environment. He acquired a knowledge of Syriac and religious principles. At an early age, he shunned the world and traveled to the Za'faran Monastery in 1729, to train in monastic life and church rules. He assumed the monastic habit and was ordained a deacon and then a priest. When Patriarch Shukr Allah observed his qualities, he ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of Hattach in the middle of December 1737, calling him Cyril Gurgis (Jirjis) at his ordination. Patriarch Jirjis III appointed him superior of the Za'faran Monastery and the diocese of Mardin in 1747. He ordained him a Maphryono of the East to succeed Li'azar IV, and called him Basilius Gurgis (Jirjis) at his ordination, at the beginning of March, 1760 (see p. 108). On November 7, 1762, Maphryono Basilius journeyed to Mosul to visit the dioceses of the East. He ordained Metropolitan Behnam for the Monastery of Mar Behnam on February 9, 1763, and returned to Mardin in September. In December, the patriarch entrusted him with the management of the Za'faran Monastery, and Maphryono Basilius left Bishop Rizq Allah as his deputy in Mosul. When the Patriarchal Throne became vacant with the death of Patriarch Jirjis III on July 7, 1768, the congregations of Amid and Mardin nominated Basilius to be his successor. The congregation of Amid informed the Vizier Husayn Pasha, Wali (governor) of Amid, of his nomination. The pasha sent one of his men to Basilius with the decree of investiture. Basilius accompanied the pasha's messenger to Diyarbakr, arriving in the city on July 11. He presented himself to the pasha, who granted him awards. He paid the pasha five purses, the required fee (for his investiture), from his own money. Four years earlier, however, his predecessor had borrowed six purses and 300 piasters from Hajj Ahmad Agha Chem Oghli of Amid and pawned the vessels of the church of Amid, which

were deposited in two cases. Maphryono Basilius and the notables contacted the creditor, Hajj Ahmad Agha, and transferred the debt (which amounted to 6,500 piasters plus interest) to his name.

Maphryono Basilius summoned the metropolitans to a synod at the Za'faran Monastery. Those who responded were Gregorius Jirjis, metropolitan of Jerusalem, who presided over the synod; Dioscorus Shukr Allah, metropolitan of the Jazira; Cyril Yuhanna ibn al-Koul; Cyril Rizq Allah, metropolitan of Mosul; Athanasius Tuma of Qutrbul, metropolitan of Amid; Gregorius Shim'un, metropolitan of Bushairiyya; Cyril Bishaa, metropolitan of the patriarchal office; and Iyawaanis Behnam, metropolitan of the Monastery of Mar Behnam. They were later joined by Gregorius Anton, bishop of Gargar, Hisn Mansur, and Kharaput, who had been recently ordained a bishop. Unanimously, they elected Maphryono Basilius a patriarch and consecrated him on Sunday, August 17, 1768. He was called Ignatius Jirjis at his ordination. (Some say he was Jirjis III. More correctly, he was Jirjis IV.) The ceremony of his ordination was attended by a large crowd of laity, preceded by the priests of Mardin and its environs.

The new patriarch sent his brother, Deacon Isaiah, to the capital (Constantinople); Isaiah acquired an excellent royal decree for his investiture from Sultan Mustafa III in the year 1182 AH/1768 AD. In the capital, he appointed as his deputy Francis Chalabi, son of Khawaja Tumajan of Mardin, the dragoman (interpreter) to the Spanish ambassador. At the beginning of 1769, he convened a synod attended by ten metropolitans and bishops to discuss church affairs. Then he journeyed to Diyarbakr, accompanied by the Metropolitans Jirjis and Bishara, to settle, with his own money, the debt owed to Hajj Ahmad. He also redeemed the pawned church vessels and restored them to the churches of their origin. He returned to the Za'faran Monastery, the Patriarchal See, where he remained throughout the whole period of his patriarchate.

The patriarchate of Jirjis IV was characterized by the erection of churches and monasteries. He moved the altar of the Monastery of Mar Hananya (the Za'faran Monastery) from the middle of the nave, where it was supported by a wall, to a more suitable location and embellished it with ornaments. He also had the altar that contained the patriarchal throne painted. He built a new cell for monks above the iron gate and renovated three more cells. He built a cell for the monks within the porch, which included the cell of monk 'Abd al-Nur. In 1772, he built six more cells for monks in the lower floor within the porches, a storehouse, a reception hall whose door looked toward the door of the Great Church, and a stable in the outer yard. In March 1775, he built a large cell for monks in front of the porch, and another porch for the cell of the

metropolitan of Jerusalem. He had new buildings constructed at the Monastery of Mar Matta and renovated the churches of Zakho, Mar Yaqub, and Mardin.

At the beginning of 1771, a plague swept through Mardin that lasted one and a half years. Many people died, including four monks, two metropolitans, the deacon Musa and his nephew Tuma, and twenty priests in Mardin and its surrounding villages. In April 1772, the plague spread to Diyarbakr and its suburbs, and as far as Mosul, where the patriarch's brother Isaiah became its victim. The patriarch donated to the Za'faran Monastery a pair of silver fans. The fans and a silver censor were adorned with gold in commemoration of Deacon Musa. In 1773, he donated a pair of fans to the church of Amid, and he gave a big cross worth 500 piasters to the Za'faran Monastery and a chandelier for the mausoleum of the fathers in 1774. In 1778, he dedicated a cross to the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin in commemoration of the two deacons Isaiah and Musa, purchased from their own money. In 1781, he donated to the Za'faran Monastery a Garshuni copy of the *History of Mikha'il al-Kabir* (*The Chronicle of Mar Mikha'il Rabo*), and a cross and a staff to the Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem.

At that time, an inclination toward the Western (Roman Catholic) doctrine appeared in the diocese of Aleppo, which began to secede from the Syrian Orthodox Church by the machinations of the Latin monks. Actually, such a tendency had begun in the time of the patriarch's predecessor. It created a serious problem for the church, along with the heavy court expenses caused by litigating its case with Metropolitan Mikha'il Jarwa. Patriarch Jurjis IV, who suspected Jarwa's intentions, summoned him and advised him to mend his ways and return to the true path. Jarwa obeyed and remained for four years at the patriarch's residence (the Za'faran Monastery). He craftily ingratiated himself outwardly to the patriarch, while inwardly he intended to secede from the church. Before returning to Aleppo, Jarwa deceitfully convinced the patriarch to send him to Aleppo in order to restore its church and congregation. The patriarch believed him and let him go. Jarwa journeyed to Aleppo, accompanied by Bishop Ibrahim and four priests, and arrived in the city on May 23, 1775. The patriarch soon realized, however, that Jarwa was treacherous. He resorted to the Ottoman rulers to punish him. But the Ottoman rulers, who twisted justice on account of bribes, turned against the patriarch. They were supported by the communicants of other church denominations which had recently converted to Catholicism. The patriarch was forced to keep his peace and appoint Jarwa as his deputy. He left Aleppo on July 29, and went to Edessa. On September 16 he arrived in Mardin, having by then lost 15,500 piasters. He treated the congregation of Aleppo with wisdom, lest they openly plunge into rebellion. Time, however, revealed their evil intentions and sick hearts. They seceded from the church, except for two

priests and a few parishioners who remained faithful to the Syrian Orthodox Church.

During Passion Week of 1775, the Chorepiscopus Sulayman, head of the Syrian Church in Egypt, died. The Coptic Patriarch, Anba Yuwannis XVIII, feared that the church might close down. He asked the Syrian bishop of Jerusalem to ordain Ni'mat Allah a priest for the church in Egypt. He wrote to the Syrian patriarch, urging him to assist the new priest. The patriarch did so and thanked Anba Yuwannis for his Orthodox perspicacity. In the fifth week of the year 1780, following Lent, Patriarch Jujjis IV went to Amid in response to the invitation of its congregation. He remained in the city until September. During this time he ordained three priests for Qutrubul and then returned to Mardin. In 1779, he fixed the festival of Mar Barsoum the ascetic on the Thursday preceding Lent, and the festival of Mar Severus (of Antioch) on the Thursday following the Fast of Nineveh. The reason for this change was that the congregations of Mardin and Diyarbakr celebrated these two festivals on February 3 and 8. After fulfilling his days on earth, he went to his reward, mourned by his people. He was seventy-two years old, and spent twelve years, eleven months and four days as patriarch. He was buried at the Za'faran Monastery in the tomb of Patriarch Jurjis II.

Patriarch Jurjis IV (may God reward him) was one of the best patriarchs of Antioch for his astuteness and generosity to the churches. In his time the Chorepiscopus Yaqub of Qutrubul flourished, writing in Syriac the book entitled *Zahrat al-M'arif* (The Flower of Knowledge). The patriarch consecrated the Holy Chrism in 1774. He ordained fifteen metropolitans and bishops, three of whom he had ordained when he was a maphryono. They are as follows:

### **1- CYRIL BISHARA, METROPOLITAN OF THE PATRIARCHAL OFFICE (1761–1789)**

Cyril Bishara was the son of the priest Ibrahim Nahit. His nephew also flourished in this family; he was the Chorepiscopus Iliyya (Elijah), son of Yaqub Nahit. Iliyya was ordained a priest for the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin in 1800, and a chorepiscopus in 1846. He passed away shortly after 1852.

Cyril was born in the city of Bedlis. He said the following about himself: "I was raised an orphan. But God led me to the compassionate Metropolitan Cyril Gurgis (Jirjis) of Mosul, who raised me appropriately, taught me and educated me. In 1747 he vested me with the monastic habit, and in 1749 he ordained me a deacon, and then a priest."

Cyril Bishara remained in the service of Metropolitan Cyril Gurgis of Mosul, who noticed his qualities and faithfulness. When Gurgis became a

maphryono, he ordained Bishara a metropolitan for his Maphrianate Office on July 29, 1761, at the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin; he called him Cyril Bishara at his ordination. Cyril became an assistant to Metropolitan Gurgis. In 1765 and 1770, he visited Bedlis to inspect the congregation in that city and, while there, ordained a few deacons. In 1768, he attended the synod at the Za'faran Monastery that elected Jirjis IV a patriarch. In May 1773, the patriarch entrusted him with the bishopric of Amid to succeed Metropolitan Tuma of Qutrubul. In the following year, he changed his ordination name to Gregorius and added to his diocese of Amid the diocese of Jerusalem. Metropolitan Gregorius and Bishop Mansur, superior of the Monastery of St. Mark, visited the dioceses to collect the revenues due the Patriarchal See.

In 1775, Metropolitan Gregorius journeyed to Bushairiyya and Se'ert. In the following year he visited Mosul. In 1779, he traveled to his own diocese of Jerusalem, passing through Aleppo, where he collected his church dues. He arrived in Jerusalem carrying with him many new church vessels and a sum of money to meet the needs of the Monastery (of St. Mark). He made an effort to settle the debt due the Armenians. Most of his concern, however, was devoted to the needs of the monastery, which he supplied with new furnishings, and he had a silver chandelier made from the superfluous vessels at the monastery. He decided to construct a building on the endowed land that belonged to the monastery, but the iniquity (of rulers) prevented him from carrying out the project. Upon learning of the death of Patriarch Jirjis IV, Metropolitan Bishara hurried to Mardin, leaving Bishop Ibrahim of Sadad as superior of the monastery. On January 25, 1782, the governor of Mardin forced him to partake in the installation of Mikha'il Jarwa as an intruding patriarch. Shortly afterward, he managed to escape persecution and joined the legitimate Patriarch Ignatius Matta. Both of them suffered adversities until they were set free. In 1783, Metropolitan Ibrahim was appointed to the diocese of Amid. Bishara remained a metropolitan of Jerusalem until 1789, when he was ordained a maphryono. According to an old book of *Homologia* (a Confession of Faith) preserved in our Library, between 1761 and 1789 Bishara ordained thirty deacons, two archdeacons, ten priests, and two chorepiscopi for the Churches of Mar Yaqub in Banabil, Mar Qawma (Cosmas) in Bedlis, the Virgin in Se'ert, the Mother of God in Amid, Mar Qawma in the village of Qarabash, Mar Quryaqos in Zarjal, Mar Barsoum in Oyus, the Monasteries of Mar Iliyya in Qanqart, the Virgin in Hattack, Mar Tuma in Qutrubul, the Martyr Shmuni in Malaha, Mar Peter and Paul in Edessa, the Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem, the Monastery of Mar Abhai, the Monasteries of the Mother of God in Hisn Mansur, Mar Barsoum in Gargar, and the Forty Martyrs in Mardin.

## **2- IYAWANNIS BEHNAME, METROPOLITAN OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR BEHNAME (1763–1776)**

Iyawannis Behname was a son of the priest Quryaqos, son of Maqdisi ‘Abd al-Ahad, whose grandfather was still living between 1702 and 1718. He was born in Mosul in the first decade of the eighteenth century. He studied Syriac and obtained knowledge of church rituals. He became a monk at the Monastery of Mar Behname and was trained in monasticism and religious sciences. He was ordained a priest before 1740, by the laying on of hands by Iyawannis Karas, metropolitan of the diocese of Mar Behname. In 1744, he was appointed an abbot of the Monastery of Mar Matta, and he returned to his Monastery of Mar Behname before 1752. When Maphryono Basilius Gurgis III (later Patriarch Jirjis IV), visited Mosul, he ordained him a metropolitan for his monastery and for the village of Ba Khudayda (Qaraqosh) on February 9, 1762. His ordination was attended by Bishop Rizq Allah. Iyawannis also witnessed the installation of Maphryono Gurgis III, who later ordained him a metropolitan, as Patriarch Jirjis IV. He attended the synod which the patriarch convened at the Za’faran Monastery in 1769. After managing his diocese for thirteen years, nine months and fifteen days, he passed away in old age on December 4, 1776, and was buried in the fathers’ mausoleum of his monastery, next to the grave of Metropolitan Karas. The date of his death was inscribed in Syriac on his tomb. Iyawannis was the last metropolitan of this diocese, for shortly after his death most of the Syrians of Qaraqosh renounced Orthodoxy (and joined the Roman Catholic Church).

He (may God have mercy on him) was an average Syriac calligrapher. Some of his copied manuscripts are preserved in Bartulli and other places. His family served the priesthood for a hundred years at the Church of the Tahira, in the Qal’a district of Mosul. Among his family who flourished were his uncle the priest Yuhanna and his son, Deacon Ishaq, who was still living in 1802, and his brother the priest Jeremiah and his son Quryaqos in 1757.

## **3- GREGORIUS ANTON, BISHOP OF GARGAR (1768–1774)**

Anton was a native of Edessa. As a widower, he entered the Za’faran Monastery and was ordained a priest before 1756. When the metropolitan see of Gargar became vacant with the death of Metropolitan Yuhanna of Gargar in the middle of July 1768 (a few days after the death of Patriarch Jirjis III), Maphryono Gurgis III ordained him a bishop for Gargar, Hisn Mansur, and Kharput. He called him Gregorius Anton at his ordination at the Za’faran Monastery on Saturday, August 16 of the same year, in the presence of eight members of the synod. On the next day, he participated with the bishop in installing Maphryono Gurgis III, who had ordained him a metropolitan, as

patriarch, as has been said earlier. Anton attended the synod convened at the beginning of the following year to install Maphryono Gurgis III as a patriarch. We saw his *systatikon*, written in Turkish with Syriac letters, preserved by Metropolitan Timothy of Tur ‘Abdin, and dated August 19. It included the names of the towns and villages of his diocese, such as Hisn Mansur, Kharput, Tiel, Oyus, Karanki, Wank, Tebisias, Hadro, and Tash Ile.

Anton administered his diocese for almost six years and three months and passed away on Tuesday, November 11, 1774. He had a son named Khajik (“Cross” in Armenian) who was still living in 1798. Among his relatives were the priest Ephraim, son of Maqdisi Arotin Kalour, who was ordained at the Za’faran Monastery in 1884, and died at Jerusalem in 1924. He was a pious man. We read a letter by Patriarch Jirjis dated July 5, 1777, addressed to the congregation of Wank, in which he mentioned that he had sent to them the monk Yaqub of Amid to collect the tithes due the patriarchate. If they found him to be qualified, they should choose him as their metropolitan. This, however, did not happen until Elias, son of al-Akhras, was ordained a metropolitan in 1782.